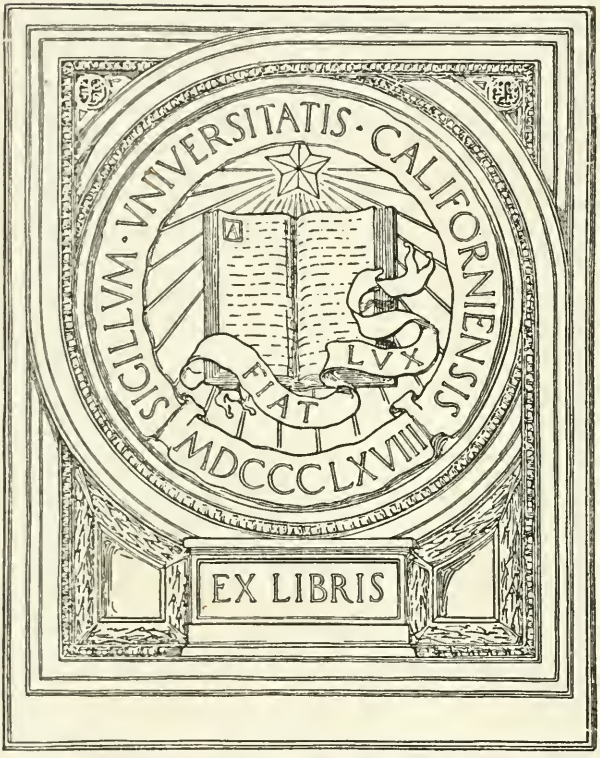

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FAITH

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BY

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

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TO

SIGNORINA ANTONIETTA SEGRÉ

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PREFACE

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS READER

EVERYTHING that a man writes brings sorrow to him of some kind or other. Especially is this the case as time goes on, and catches one a-thinking on the days when that which now is but a shadow, even though fairly stamped upon a page in moulded letters, was once a living thing. Let nobody deceive himself (as is the wont of many, here in this island home of ours) that books are spun out from the inner consciousness, after the fashion that the learned German evoked his elephant, or of him who made the fiddle out of his own head and still had wood sufficient left in it to make another violin.

Such processes are well enough for silkworms, but men spin little silk from their own bowels, and still less from their brains.

All that they write, even the sonnets, those of Shakespeare and of Keats, has cost them

labour and much biting of their pens. This is so, and artists of all kinds, whether in paint or letters, in marble, bronze, or in what medium they work, all know it thoroughly. Those who contest the point are the idealists, that is to say, the men who as they pass their days in business or the like, cherish devoutly the idea that art of any kind is of the nature of white magic, and comes into the world as easily as does a calumny or an unnecessary lie.

All that we write is but a bringing forth again of something we have seen or heard about. What makes it art is but the handling of it, and the imagination that is brought to bear upon the theme out of the writer's brain. It follows therefore that all writing, as I said before, brings sorrow in its train. Even when one looks back and reads the few rare passages that flowed off from the pen so easily, that on finishing them one was half tempted to exclaim, "Then I too am a writer!" and even when those passages were written about scenes one loved or of events pleasant to dwell upon, there still wells up the bitter-sweetness in the mind that passages, scenes, and events are past and cannot be recalled. It may be that a painter with his long stroke of the brush, so

different to the niggling of the pen, is differently affected; but then his work is beautiful in itself, and must remain perforce a thing of beauty, even to himself. Painters, I fancy, are the pleasantest companions of all the race of men who follow any kind of art, either for bread, or as a man loves a capricious mistress, who on her part half scorns him, and of whom he has no need, but still adores, chiefly perhaps because no bond, either of law or of necessity, enforces him to love.

Whether it is or not as I have fancied with the painters, certain it is that writers store up sorrow for themselves, by setting down some of the myriad thoughts on paper, for all time (or unto such time as the unsaleable edition of their book is pulped), that course through every brain. Had he not chanced to write, the thoughts had been forgotten, and not remained to plague the thinker of them and to remind him that time flies.

What reason pushed the inventive Arab or Chaldean to invent a water-clock I never understood. Why could he possibly desire to know what time of day it was, and thus remind himself another hour had slidden past into the vacuum of time?

In the same way (at least, so it is said) that when the rainbow falls upon a tree no caterpillars hang to the leaves, time unrecorded does not cling about the soul.

To record, even to record emotions, is to store up a fund of sadness, and that is why all writing is a sort of icehouse of the mind, in which that which once was a warm and living action, a feeling, scene, experience, joy, or sorrow, is now preserved, as it were, frozen, stiff, deprived of actuality, and a mere chopping-block on which fools exercise their wits.

From this it would appear that none of us should write, except a poet here and there, or a compiler of a railway time-table, for they clearly are wanted in a well-constituted state; but, oh illustrious reader, for I assume you are illustrious, because you cannot write yourself, and hence are well endowed with the divine and sacred fire of criticism, you will find that almost all of the stories, sketches, or what you choose to call them, in this book are sad. None of them, that is if I remember rightly, end in a blaze of sunset, actual or moral; virtue in none of them is in the least atom better rewarded than it is actually rewarded in the world. In none of them is any moral

drawn, or if it is, it is attempted to be drawn, it is set down as truthfully as possible, which naturally has the effect of making it seem false. Tell me though, oh illustrious reader, you who though, as I said before, cannot write yourself and yet are born a judge of wit, of pathos, style, of composition, and who can weigh imagination to the last scruple, in the balance of your brain, is it not better to write truthfully, when all is sad, than to write on sad things after the manner of your only jig-maker?

Cooped underneath the sky, like butterflies shut up by schoolboys under a finger-bowl, we can but flutter, or if we fly, rise only to the middle of the glass. What we can do, is to look out as far as possible through the imprisoning crystal and set down what we see. So, I have written all the sketches in the book, as clearly as my vision serves me to peep out. If they seem false to you, oh most illustrious, surely it is a little hard to blame a post if a blind man runs up against it and batters out his brains!

R. B. Cunninghame Graham.

SOR CANDIDA AND THE BIRD

The long grey buildings of the convent with their overhanging red-tiled roofs threw a refreshing shadow on the heated street. The sun-parched trees stood stiff and motionless as sentinels frozen at their posts. For months it had not rained in Avila. For miles on every side of the old town, the stone-strewn plains were heated like a kiln. The dark grey walls gave out the heat as you passed by and touched them with your hand. The distant mountains shivered in the heat. Upon the plains the last dead stalks of fennel loomed in the mirage of the heat like palm-trees in the sand. Lakes formed in front of men upon their mules, their faces shielded from the scorching sun by handkerchiefs, and with their stiff Castilian hats pulled down almost upon their shoulders to protect their necks, and then as the mules clattered on the stones, or brushed against the withered herbage with a crackling noise, took themselves further off, as fortune does in life,

after one tantalising glance. Sheep and the cattle stood round the deep-dug wells, their heads bowed low, and their flanks heaving in the sun, waiting till evening for the coming of the men to draw the water in the long leathern bags. The yellow swirling rivers had dried up, leaving the mud as hard as kaolin, and here and there held thick, green water, with a dead horse or cow, bloated and swollen enormously, just floating on the top. All nature suffered with the heat, and birds approached the houses seeking help, just as they do in northern climates in the frost.

Is there at bottom some mysterious bond between all living things, which, but for our religion and conceit, should have made all the animals and us one clan? Who knows? Upon the strip of sand, which in old Spanish towns lies at the edges of the streets (just where the cobbles end), and makes a sort of neutral territory between them and the gutter, right opposite the convent door, a bird lay fluttering with its beak open, and its eyes almost closed. It lay half choking in the sun, its beady eyes becoming glazed, and its perhaps immortal little spirit just trembling to be free and join the universal soul; a minute or two

more and it would have gone to swell the army of tired soldiers, camels, and horses who have died of thirst amongst the sands. It may be, as they say in Spain, God was not willing, or the slight fluttering of the feathers raised a little dust, for at that moment a side door opened, and with a cautious glance to see that no one was about, a nun stepped out, and taking up the bird, bore it into the shade. It lay almost expiring in her hand as she, with many little cries of pity, took a piece of rag and gently dropped some water in its mouth. As the drops followed one another, it slowly came back to the life it had so nearly left. Its head became less languid, and its eyes brighter, until at last it feebly pecked the hand that held it, making the nun smile, muttering it acted just like a Christian, as she released it, and let it hop about her cell. Then taking up a cane, she split it for a perch, and stuck it in the darkest corner of the cell, making some holes in the rough plastering. All had gone well so far, and on its perch the bird sat resting, and recovering its strength. Quickly she made a little cage out of split canes, not thinking for a moment that after giving life she thus would take away life's chiefest treasure—liberty;

but all in tender heart. The cage contrived, and the revived and still half-drooping little bird duly inducted to its prison, she put a broken saucer and some bread-crumbs by its side, and sat down, proud and happy with her work.

Sor Candida was tall and dark, with large black eyes and a slight pencilling of hair upon her upper lip. Though she had left the world and all its vanities, losing her liberty, perhaps to save herself from want, just as she had herself deprived the bird of his for the same cause, her walk was springy, and she retained that easy swinging of the hips which is the race mark of the women of the Spains. Had she been in the world, no doubt, as she walked through the plaza or the street, "God bless your mother," "Long live grace," and other cries of admiration would have followed her, and even as it was, the priests who visited the convent, and talked occasionally in the dark "locutorio" through the grating to the nuns, would sometimes say to one another that "Sister Candida was the fine essence of true salt, a pearl that God Himself, no doubt, was pleased to wear." In the same way, a bull-fighter who has left the ring, if he pass near a

bull, rarely refrains from "challenging," as those intelligent in such things say, by shouting loudly, and by stamping with his feet.

Her happiness was at its height, and she was praising God for having sent her just in time (another proof, if one were wanted, of His goodness towards all created things; well is it said that not a sparrow falls without His ken) to save the little life, and thinking to herself what name to give her prisoner, when a doubt arose. Her heart stopped beating for a moment, as she thought the convent rules allowed no property. Nothing but articles of individual use, a rosary, a book of hours, a hair shirt, or a scourge, was fitting for a nun professed, of the discalced and blessed order, which the great Saint of Avila herself had purified. Pets were not to be thought of, and she reflected that it seemed ages since she had known the bird, and he on his part twisted round his head, seeming to watch her movements in the cell.

All might have yet been well, had she but yielded to that unstable guide, mere reason, and opening the cell door, allowed the bird to fly. He would have launched himself into the air with a glad chirp, for by this time the heat had

moderated as eventide drew near, and flown refreshed to greet his friends, and tell them in the trees, or in the corner where he had his little home beneath the overhanging roof of some high belfry, of the amazing charity of a great being, tall as is a tower.

Sor Candida, young, kindly, and deprived of love by the religious life, felt if she let her new companion go that she would feel as does a man cast on a desert island with but one fellow, if that fellow dies.

Surely God would not be enraged if she allowed the bird to stay! Had He not sent him to her, or her to him, just in the nick of time? He looked so pretty with his round beady eyes, which followed her about. Besides, she felt he was too weak to fly, so as the convent bell rang out for benediction, and the shadows lengthened, stretching across the cell till they bathed half of it in a cool darkness, she took a handkerchief, and having covered up the cage, hurried off to the choir.

Perhaps her thoughts strayed from the contemplation of the Saviour's passion, realistically set forth ("to a bad Christ, much blood"), and from the antiphones, to her own cell, where in a corner the precious bird was sleeping, after

his escape. The office over, all the nuns walked in the garden, pacing to and fro, glad to escape the heat the stones threw out at sunset, and to enjoy the air. Some sat and talked about the little gossip of the place, whilst others roamed about alone, turning incessantly when they reached the wall, just like wild animals shut in a cage in public gardens, to be gaped upon by fools. Others, who had the gift of prayer, sat alone enrapt, their lips just moving, and their beads slipping mechanically between their fingers as their souls strove to join themselves with God. Friends walked about in pairs, chattering and laughing almost as gaily as girls do in the world, and even pinching one another on the sly. And as they walked, the bell of the cathedral rang out, sounding as if, from the stiff arm of some recumbent warrior in the choir, a shield had fallen upon the stones, so martial was its clang.

The breeze just rustled in the trees, stirring their parched and thirsty leaves with a metallic sound. A coolness fell upon the land, and from the country came the lowing of the cows as they approached the well, where, since the sun had set, stood shepherds, their sheepskin

jackets thrown upon the ground, as they strained on the rope which, passing through a wooden pulley, held a leathern bucket, just as in farthest Nabothéa, Esau gave water to his herds.

So still the air was that the warning of the clock in the great tower upon the walls, before it struck, was heard across the town, whilst from the thirsty ground a scent of freshness came, as if to tell mankind that, down below the surface, all vegetation was alive though sleeping through the heat.

Still all against the convent rules, the bird continued to sing on, and in the summer mornings, before the enemy, the sun, came out declaring war upon mankind, Sor Candida's most intimate and dearest friends used to assemble stealthily and fill her cell, to hear its melody. The delightful sense of doing something wrong —surely stolen music is as sweet as stolen waters — increased their pleasure, and they would sit enrapt, closing their eyes, to hear it lift its little canticle.

Holding each other's hands they sat, whilst one placed at the door looked through a chink, to give the alarm if the superior should come upon her rounds. All prospered, and the bird

waxed fat, fed with nefarious rape and hempseed, introduced contraband into the convent by a sympathising lay sister who went into the world to buy provisions, and his sweet singing ravished the nuns into an ecstasy of innocent delight.

At times Sor Candida would say, "Sisters, it seems impossible, but that the Lord is pleased to hear the harmony the little one pours forth, all in His praise." And they, answering, would repeat gravely, "Yes, little sister, it must be so"; then they would push a piece of groundsel into the cage, for never had the garden of the convent been so free of weeds as since the advent of the little minstrel, saved so providentially to sing the praises of the Lord.

All went on well, day following day, and though no doubt the bird mourned for the reasonable converse of his kind, and wondered how the world wagged with his fellows, he still grew fat, as it is said did Silvio Pellico, although we have no record of his song.

But, one fine morning as they sat listening to the feathered psalmody, all lost in admiration, and with the ready tear of simple souls glistening in all their eyes, a knock was heard,

and the cell door flung open showed the superior standing in their midst. Sternly she gazed, her broad white "tocas" looking like driven snow against the dark brown habit which she wore, of the same make and quality as that worn by the foundress of their order, she who, although she sits at the right hand, perhaps by virtue even more of her humanity than of her saintship, is yet a colonel of artillery, where the blood-red and orange banner floats against the sky. Her rosary hung by her side, the beads of coral and the little chains which held them, hammer wrought, with the "Maria" made in Zaragoza, bearing the figure of the "Virgen del Pilar." A round medallion of the blessed foundress hung about her neck, and her bare feet, thrust into hempen sandals, were white and clean, the blue veins standing out upon the insteps, showing she followed the injunctions of her saint who said, "My daughters, it is dreadful to be foul." Her shale-black hair, half hidden by the "tocas," was silvering at the temples, and her round, fat, good-tempered face was puckered to a frown.

"Daughters," she said, "what brings so many of you here into one cell, as if you

were conspirators? You know our rules forbid one nun to go into another's cell without permission, and never with closed doors."

The nuns stood silent, cowering together like wild mares in a corrál. Then from the corner of the cell there came a muffled chirp, where the cage, hastily covered with a pocket-handkerchief, did not exclude the light. The prioress made a step forward, and, uncovering the cage, saw at a glance the motive of the nuns' silence, and the offender against all her rules, serenely seated on his perch. Setting her face as sternly as she could, she said:

"Which of you is it who has brought this bird into the cell? All of you know that anything, animate or inanimate, which causes a nun's heart to stray from its allegiance to her spiritual husband, Christ, not only violates the spirit, but the letter of our rule."

Still no one answered, till, at last, pushed by the rest, Sor Candida, drying her tears and with one hand upon the little cage, as if to save it from the wrath of heaven, stood forth, and with the eloquence which has absorbed the entire activity of her race, in latter days, took up her parable.

She laid herself upon the mercy, both of

heaven and the prioress; told how, from her window, she had seen the bird lie choking in the sand, felt for its little agony, and had remembered that, when upon the cross, our Lord had suffered all but thirst, without complaint, and how something, she knew not what, had bade her venture, although she knew that by thus stepping out into the street she had fallen into sin.

Then as her voice gained strength, and as she saw the encouraging glances of her fellow-culprits, she explained how that ("and this the prioress knew well") one sin leads to another, and by degrees all she had done seemed to grow natural, and it at last appeared that she had known the little bird for years.

The prioress stood listening, letting her beads mechanically slip between her fingers, whilst her eyes now and then looked vacant, as if her thoughts were straying to the patio of some brown Castilian grange, where children played about, and where, just underneath the eaves, birds hung in cages, singing all the day.

The nuns all marked the look, and pressing closer to Sor Candida, encouraged her to speak. She told how, when the bird first sang, she thought the angels had come into the cell,

and how she felt that all its singing was to God's glory, and then, the words half choking her in the sudden rush of explanation, she begged forgiveness, saying that if the prioress opened the cage and let the bird escape, she had better also open the convent door and thrust her out into the street. She stopped, and for a moment nothing was heard, but the nuns' stifled sobbing, until the prioress, with the frown almost vanished from her face, said :

" Daughter, you have acted wrongly, but we are human ; let me see the little creature closer," and when they brought the cage, put out a plump white finger, and allowed the bird to peck at it, so naturally, it seemed as if instead of a grave nun of high position, she was a simple woman in the world.

Unwittingly she had exposed herself to the dread influence of sympathy, and as she stood a moment undecided, one of the sisters seized the hand which hung down by her side, and kissed it, whilst the others, crowding about her, all found voice to beg for the retention of the little bird, which seated on its perch seemed to survey them critically, an attitude which it is not impossible is frequent in animals towards

men. The prioress, after a moment or two's silence, drew herself up and gave her dictum :

"Daughters, our good provincial comes to-morrow on a visit of inspection, and I will tell him what has occurred, and as he settles, so it shall be done." As she stopped speaking, the angelus called the nuns into the choir, and trooping out, they took their places in their stalls.

Next morning brought the provincial, who, in a shaky cab, drove to the door, looking incongruous, just as a nun looks out of place when travelling in a train. Had he but ambled to the door upon a mule, all would have been in keeping except the canvas sand-shoes which he wore in lieu of sandals, perhaps out of a half-felt spirit of homage to external progress, content to pass as a reformer to the outward eye, so that he kept the inward vision well obscured with the theology which he had learned in youth, or maybe for his corns.

Withal an able man, and active in the business of the order, untiring in all things pertaining to the welfare of the province over which he ruled. Well educated, but not intellectual, for "quod natura non dat, Salamanca non præstat," he yet had that dry humour, so com-

mon throughout Spain, together with a democratic freedom in address, unknown in northern countries, and which perhaps the Arabs left as a memorial of their sway.

When he had had his chocolate, and gone minutely into all the details of the convent with the prioress, and when the sweets, for which the nuns were famous, the hard quince cheese and sweet-potatoes swimming in syrup thick as honey, with the turrón from Alicante, and the white cakes with caraways incrusted on the paste, were set upon the table, seated in a high-backed chair, the seat, of leather deeply stamped, held to the framework by brass-headed, hand-made nails, he took up his parable :

"How go our daughters in the Lord? Nuns, as your blessed foundress said, are ill to rule, and I to whom it is appointed to govern and inspect, know that they sometimes prove as difficult to manage as a flock of sheep. I speak under due licence and with pardon, for we should not compare a Christian to a beast."

Then, drawing out his snuffbox, he tapped it in a contemplative way and took a pinch, brushing the residue from off his nostrils with a brown, hairy hand.

The prioress, who saw her opportunity, smiled and said:

"Surely your paternity does not imagine that I guide my flock after the fashion that a muleteer drives mules by shouting 'Arré' at them and by throwing stones?"

He laughed and said the answer was as full of grace as is an egg of meat, and after he had blown his nose with a not overclean red cotton handkerchief, the prioress placed before him the difficulty that had arisen, and asked advice whether the bird might be retained, and, if it were retained, was it not likely it would prove a stumbling-block, turning the minds of those who ought to think on spiritual things to the mere matters of the world?

Taking a piece of sweet-potato on the end of his broad-pointed knife, the provincial conveyed it dexterously into his mouth, and swallowing it with a sound as when a duck plunges his beak below the water of a pond to eat a weed, and having wiped his mouth upon the tablecloth, for a moment closed his eyes, and then began to give his dictum on the case.

"Most of the trouble that we have in life," he said, "is due to human nature, which we

can modify and alter, just as we can convey the water from a spring in a lead pipe into a house, so that the pressure be great enough to make it rise."

"Ah," the prioress cut in, "it is then pressure that makes the water rise. I never understood it, or how it was the water came into a house simply by laying down a pipe. . . . Wonderful, indeed, are the Almighty's ways; but there are other things, and how a key turns in a lock, and why the water rises in a pump, I cannot understand . . . but life is full of mysteries that no one can explain."

"Mother," the visitor rejoined, "the mind of woman is not made for science; there are mysteries which it is best that only men should pry into; believe me, peaches lose their bloom by being rubbed, even with a silk handkerchief. Faith is your province, and the things that you have mentioned you had better take on trust, knowing that those, competent by their sex and education to deal with problems such as these, have solved them once for all. What says S. Chrysostom, 'Mens feminæ non est . . . ,' but why quote Latin? and besides, we stray far from our text. I have been thinking as I spoke, on this thing and on

that, and as I said, nature cannot be stifled, and it may be that it is not entirely without some great design that Providence has thus permitted this little creature of His own creating to have come into your lives. I would not that the sisters set their affections too much on the bird; but it may serve perhaps to show them resignation to the conventual life, being as it were itself an inmate of a cell, within a cell. So, for the present it can remain, and I will ask our Vicar-General when I see him, if I have acted well."

The prioress thanked him, and said she would convey what he had said to Sister Candida and to the other nuns, and he, having taken leave, got back into his cab, and disappeared down the steep, stony street, the driver cracking his whip noisily as he sat with a rein in either hand, chewing the burnt-out stump of a cigar.

The rescued bird little by little grew in favour with the nuns, who all declared to hear him sing was next to listening to the celestial choirs. Even the prioress brought him some sugar now and then, and smiled good-naturedly upon Sor Candida when she launched out into his praise. Occasionally, so much he waxed in

favour and in grace, his cage was taken into church, and as the organ pealed he twitteringly sang his little pæan to the Lord, making the nuns rejoice.

A year passed by, and once again the short, but fierce Castilian summer heated the rocks of Avila, making the lichens and the mosses, with which the winter rains had clothed them, here and there shrivel like leather, left out in the sun. Once more the parameras turned as brown as is the Sáhara, and round the wells once more the expectant cattle waited for evening with their heads hanging to the ground. The convent once again threw a cool shadow on the street, and on the distant mountains of the Gredos only faint lines of snow remained that looked like veins of quartz or marble, seen in the clear white light. The heat continued into autumn, till the great day when Avila turns out to honour her who, born a simple gentlewoman, died the most human of the saints.

The convent was astir, and all the nuns from early dawn were running up and down, decking the church with flowers. Even the prioress abated somewhat of her dignity, and as she mopped her face and drank repeatedly

from the white porous bottle from Andújar, hung up in the draught to keep the water cool, said she had never seen the blessed foundress' day so stifling, and that she understood how much the Blessed Mother, born in cool Avila, had suffered in her journeys to the south. Services followed fast on one another, and high mass over, the nuns all crowded to the windows to see the image of the saint borne in procession through the streets. Aloft upon men's shoulders, and swaying to and fro as they with difficulty passed through the crowded streets, the saint appeared, her halo round her head, and in her hand one of her books, the other stretched in attitude of benediction to the crowd.

All the old palaces were crowded to the roofs. On all the balconies women with flowers in their coarse black hair leaned on each other's shoulders, and in the blazing sun, the men and boys, their sleek and close-cropped heads impervious to the heat, stood and admired, taking their cigarettes out of their mouths just as the saint drew level with them, and replacing them at once as she passed on, the bearers holding theirs unlit between their fingers stained with tobacco juice. From

the adjoining country tall and sinewy men, clad in short jackets and in knee-breeches, stood holding their stiff felt hats, their heads bound round with handkerchiefs, which they wore turbanwise with the ends dangling underneath. Their wives and daughters, dressed in short bell-shaped skirts, puffed out with many-coloured flannel petticoats, had handkerchiefs crossed on their breasts, and their hair plaited into tails. As the procession passed they crossed themselves and fell upon their knees.

It took its way down tortuous cobbled streets, past mediæval houses with their coat of arms speaking of when the mystic city deserved its name of "Avila of the Knights," by little plazas in which acacias grew, by the cathedral door, half fortress and half church, whose battlemented walls contrast so strangely with its belfry and its bells, until it reached the gate, where it came out upon the road to San José, the first foundation of the saint. All day the cannon roared, and in the churches services succeeded services, and Avila, for once, woke up in its desire to honour her who has made it known to all the world.

Inside the convent, when at last the services were done, and as the nuns sat talking in the

refectory after their evening meal, the door was opened, and Sor Candida appeared, pale and with staring eyes, and in response to their inquiries exclaimed the "sin against the Holy Ghost," and rushed back to her cell. The nuns sat horrified, and the prioress, taking some holy water and a taper as arms against the evil one, who, she averred, must suddenly have fallen upon Sor Candida, went, amongst exclamations from the sisterhood of horror and alarm, to see what had occurred.

She paused before the door and, looking in, saw kneeling on the floor Sor Candida, sobbing and calling down the curses of the Lord upon her head. Before her on a chair was set the little cage, where once the rescued bird had sat upon his perch, and had poured forth the melodies which, as the nuns averred, were praises to the Lord.

The cage was there, a lump of sugar and a piece of groundsel, dried brown with heat, were sticking in its bars. The earthen water-vessel was upset and dry, and in the bottom lay a little bundle of dishevelled feathers, out of which stuck a head with glassy eyes and beak wide open, showing that the poor occupant of the cane cell had died of thirst; but rescued,

as it seemed, to taste once more the bitterness of death, by an inexorable fate.

Tears blurred the eyes of the good-natured prioress. Twice she essayed to speak, and then Sor Candida, rising from her knees, looked at her wildly and exclaimed, "This is the sin against the Holy Ghost I have committed.

"Whilst I prayed in the church and sat and watched our saint borne through her town in triumph, this little one of God lay choking in the heat.

"How could the saint forget? It would have cost her nothing to have put a thought into my mind.

"This punishment perhaps has come upon me as a warning that we nuns should not attach ourselves to any one but Christ."

She sank again upon her knees, and the poor prioress, having again essayed to speak without avail, stood playing nervously with the Maria of her rosary.

A SILHOUETTE

The great brown plains of Entre Rios wore an unfamiliar air. Herds of tame mares had run half wild. They snorted and made off, a thousand yards away, their tangled manes and tails all knotted up with burs, streaming out in the wind. The cattle had become as fierce as buffaloes, and anyone who lost his horse had to make long detours, for to approach them was as dangerous as to come near a tiger or a lion. Only about the flat-roofed, whitewashed houses, set in their frames of peach groves, did a few animals remain domestic, and even those, at the approach of man, often made off and joined their fellows on the plains.

Sheep were close-herded, not by mere boys who climbed up to their saddles by placing a small, brown, prehensile toe upon their horse's knees, but by armed men.

The deer and ostriches ran if they saw a man a mile away, and disappeared down the brown grassy swells, just as a flying-fish shoots

down the watery hills raised by the North-East Trades.

Men, "campeando" horses that had strayed, if they were forced to ascend a little hill, got off, and creeping on all fours, surveyed the country cautiously, and then, having made sure that all was quiet on the plain beyond, remained as short a time as possible standing against the sky. If at the crossing of a river, where the thick belts of hardwood trees obscured the view, two travellers came unexpectedly upon each other face to face, their hands at once sought pistol or "facón," and as they crossed at a sufficient distance to escape a sudden shot or lasso cast, cautiously passed the time of day, and not infrequently, seized with a panic, spurred their horses, and galloped for a mile or so before they drew their reins.

The sight, on the horizon, of a band of men made the few dwellers in the scattered mud-built ranchos flee to the woods, driving their horses, carrying their wives and children, at full speed, leaving their scanty household goods to the protection of their dogs.

For months the revolution had been going on, the rival bands roaming about and stealing horses, slaughtering the cattle, and now and

then, if they could catch a man or two alone, cutting their throats just as they cut a sheep's, driving the knife in at the point with the edge outwards, and bending back the head.

The death of General Justo de Urquiza had broken up the province into two hostile camps, and Reds and Whites maddened and raved about the land, avoiding one another for the most part, but fighting furiously when circumstances brought them to striking distance and there was no escape. Prisoners had little chance, and those who fell alive into the enemies' hands were foolish not to have kept a cartridge, as now and then they were sewn up in hides fresh stripped from off an ox, then left to die, exposed to sun and rain, and eaten by the flies. Others were killed in various ingenious ways, and the best anyone could hope for was to be shot, or have his throat cut out of hand. No hypocritical pretence of treating fallen enemies as friends had ever crossed the minds of anybody, and war was carried on just as it might have been between wild beasts, quite naturally, and with the full amount of cruelty with which our nature has endowed us, free and unrestrained. Still, on the whole, things were no worse than they

are in European wars, except that every man who fought, knew that he did so with a halter round his neck.

As all the rank and file on either side were pressed, occasionally fathers and sons or brothers found themselves opposed to one another, and, strange to say, the claims of party as a general rule proved stronger than the call of blood, and not infrequently it chanced that friends were called upon to kill each other, and did so, as it appeared, without a qualm of conscience, so strong is discipline, and so amenable mankind to every influence, whether of custom or of use.

It chanced upon a day, near Villaguay, two brothers owned a small estancia, known as "Las Arias," close to a strip of monté near a river in which carpinchos swam and tortoises abounded, and where green parakeets flew shrieking through the maize field, and built their hanging nests in the old espinillo trees, which here and there stood up amongst the corn. The thick green grass fed mares and cattle, and kept them fat and sleek, when on the outside "camps" animals starved from the lack of pasture, and trailed themselves laboriously for miles to drink at water-holes, upon

the face of which carcases bloated in the sun, floated like bladders, and in whose mud, cows and thin mares got stuck like flies in treacle, and slowly starved, surrounded by a troop of vultures, who sat and waited patiently, just as the faithful followers of some great politician sit faithfully expecting the glad moment when his death shall free them and unchain their tongues, which have got stiff for want of exercise during their leader's life.

The brothers lived the ordinary life of men in those days, on the plains. From their youth upwards they had scanned the Pampa as sailors scan the sea, reading it like a book, and knowing almost instinctively, all the lore men learn when born to look at nature as an enemy, between whom and themselves a temporary truce exists, but which at any moment may be broken in the twinkling of an eye. Men were, of course, all hostile to them, and their philosophy, short, pithy, and extracted from the simples of their lives, bade them beware, and as they said themselves, "Never facilitate," that is, never to sit down on the left of anyone, for by so doing he had you at a disadvantage when high words ensued, and you essayed to draw your knife. So, at the passing of a river,

if you could well avoid it, you did not ride into the water first, especially if you were wearing silver spurs or reins, or any of the massive trappings with which on feast days men adorned their horses, for it might chance that you received a knife-thrust in the back from a too much admiring friend, or perhaps merely because the sudden lust to kill, so frequent amongst dwellers on the plains, rose in the heart of the man following you, just as in islands far out at sea a roller suddenly sets in during a calm, and sweeps away boats anchored off the shore.

To these two brothers, with their quiet, but occasionally bloody, pastoral life, whose only care was to acquire some silver horse gear, to keep their cattle fat, and their "tropilla" sleek and tame, and in whose minds a vague but stimulating idea that they were free, with no one daring to constrain them in their lives, the fear of revolution hung like a black cloud, which somehow it had always seemed impossible should burst. Not that they cared about the matter in the abstract, knowing that when a Government went out a revolution followed, just as inevitably as blood pours out after you plunge a knife into a sheep. It seemed to

them quite natural, for judging by themselves, they knew no one gave up a woman or a horse without a fight, and what so natural as that a man who had enjoyed the sweets of being "government" should struggle to retain his place at the knife's point, and to the utmost of his might?

So, as they lived their lives, religiously catching a horse at night, to stake out ready to stand all day and blink and hang his head, if not required for work, and sitting hours in the kitchen drinking their maté, and illustrating all their points by diagrams drawn with the point of a "facón" on the mud floor, upon them came one morning, as a Pampéro comes up on a summer's day, the news that General Fuláno had "pronounced." Soon came the usual rumours in a revolution, of men impressed to serve, of horses taken, of cattle killed, and now and then mysterious parties of armed men passed, almost, as it were, hull down on the horizon of the Pampean ocean, a gleam of sun falling occasionally on a lance head or rifle barrel, before they sank beneath the grassy waves which roll towards the south.

Much did the brothers and their mother deliberate on what was best to do to avoid the

ruin which they foresaw would fall upon them. The mother, an old "china" woman, wrinkled and brown, was urgent that her two sons should get together all their best horses and "emigrate," that is, cross either into Santa Fé or Uruguay, and as she said, "Play armadillo." But they, used to the district, and knowing the recesses of the "montés" by the rivers as well as if they had been tigers or carpinchos, thought it was best to stay at home and wait.

They held their council, after the gaucho fashion, in the kitchen, sitting upon hard blocks of ñandubay or horses' heads, passing the maté round, and now and then holding it in their hands and listening, as a horse snorted, or a stallion, gathering up his mares, galloped past in the dark. Occasionally the tame "chajá" gave its shrill cry, causing the mother to look up and say that either it would rain, because, as all men knew, when the "chajá" cried, that it had to rain, even against God's will, or that there was a thief afoot after the horses staked out near the house.

They sat and talked, watching the negro "capataz" Gregorio come in and out, the fire-light falling on his silver-handled knife as he walked to and fro as noiselessly as if he were

a ghost, in his white "potro" boots. His "santas tardes" broke the silence, and, sitting down, he took the maté from the attendant negro girl who stood by, with a small kettle ready on the fire to fill the gourd, and suck at the bombilla to see it was not choked before she handed it about. The others looked at him in silence till he had drunk his maté, for it would be bad manners to speak first to anyone who comes into a room. Unsheathing his long knife, after apology for drawing it before a lady, he laid it by his side, and, taking out a lump of black tobacco, dexterously cut enough, and tearing from a sheet of paper, about as large as a good sheet of foolscap, a piece of the right size, and holding it between his toes which stuck out from his "potro" boots, made toeless so as to catch the stirrup, he rubbed the cut tobacco fine and made a cigarette. Lighting it with a cinder held upon his knife, he blew a thin blue cloud from his thick nostrils, and began slowly.

"Si, si, señor, they say that parties of the Reds have been about the Gualeguáy, not twenty leagues away. Lopez Jordán is moving southward with a horde of Correntinos, infidels who all speak Guarani. From Villaguáy down

to Calá, and right through Montiel, scarcely a horse is left, and all the beasts they kill, they roast with the hide on, so that there is a double loss, both of the meat and hide."

A "Si, señor," half whispered, was his answer, and through the door, glistening amongst the leaves of the peach "monté," the giant fireflies known as "tulipanes," flitted like humming-birds that had been rubbed with phosphorus, and from the plain stretching out white in the bright moonlight, the acrid scent of sheep floated upon the air, their bleating in the fold seeming like distant bells. Occasionally dogs barked, and now and then the shrill "chajá" repeated his wild note, and flapped his horny wings with a strange hollow sound.

Gregorio, suddenly starting to his feet, went out, and after listening anxiously, lay down, and, with his ear close to the ground, remained a little motionless, then getting up said, "Just at the pass, you know, where the tall seibo grows, I hear the noise of a large body of armed men."

"Why armed?" one of the maté drinkers said.

"Firstly, because no body so considerable as this is likely to be out at night except in

arms, and secondly, because I hear steel scabbards ring, which probably are those worn by the officers, for the men wear them sticking through their girths."

In the twinkling of an eye the quiet kitchen was in confusion, and the two brothers hurriedly kissed their mother and, rushing out to where their horses fed attached to stake ropes, mounted in haste, barebacked, and quickly gathering up the horses feeding round their mare, whom they released as if by magic, one brother slipping off his horse as lightly as a leaf falls from a tree, to take the bell from off her neck, like shadows disappeared into the night, all the loose horses galloping in front.

A dropping shot or two and a wild galloping of unseen horses showed that the brothers had been seen by the advanced guard of the marauding party, but soon the unfamiliar noises died away, and left the plain silent and peaceful and as if nothing more was passing than the quiet setting of the stars.

Inside the kitchen the night wore on, with now and then a prayer, and with the maté going round from hand to hand, and now and then the negro capataz went out, lay down and listened, and coming back, sat gravely down,

saying that he heard nothing, but that the Three Marias were getting low on the horizon, and it was time for sleep, seeing that even they, the blessed three, set in the heavens by God Himself to keep the holy Trinity before men's eyes, would soon retire to rest.

The mother of the boys, escorted by her negro maidservant, carrying a kettle in her hand so that her mistress might take a maté before she went to bed, went out, and passed into the grey light of the coming dawn; passing beneath the stunted China trees, skirting the well round which a pack of yellow dogs as lean as wolves were sleeping, who blinked at them and then dozed off again.

The women stopped before the entrance to the low white house, listened intently for a moment just as wild horses listen, even before they are alarmed, and then quietly closed the door, almost mechanically, as if they had been walking in their sleep.

The capataz, left all alone, smoked silently for a few minutes, then rising, he extinguished the "candil" which burned in an inverted mare's bell, stuck between the mouldings of a broken cattle brand driven into the earthen floor. Then, taking off his "chiripá," he

placed his knife close to his hand, just underneath his saddle, and stretching himself out, his feet towards the fire, wrapped himself in his poncho, and fell asleep. Towards daylight he was roused by the dogs barking, and, looking out in the first light of the false dawn, saw a man riding a tired horse, hatless and wet, advancing to the house. Taking his long silver-handled facón in his left hand, concealed beneath the poncho which had covered him asleep, he cautiously advanced to the "palenqúe," and waited till the man came up. At twenty yards away he knew him, and called out, "Ah! patroncito, what has happened? Where are your brother and the horses?" But a glance at the exhausted rider showed him that something untoward had occurred. Sliding off, all in one motion, so quickly that his right foot almost seemed to touch the ground before the left, and yet so quietly that he scarce moved the dew upon the grass, the young man slipped the bridle from his horse, which stood a moment hanging its head, with flanks tucked up and the wet dew clinging upon its quarters; and then, shaking like a retriever dog, lay down and rolled, then shook itself again, and quietly began to feed.

Lifting the dried mare's hide, that hanging from two pegs, served as a door, they passed into the kitchen, and when the capataz had blown the ashes of the banked-up fire into a glow, and thrown a bundle of dried thistle stalks upon it, he heated water, and, handing the young man a maté, said, "Drink, patroncito, and tell me what it is. Where is your brother? Is he alive, or riding in the plains of Trapalanda, as the Indians say?"

Sucking the hot and bitter liquid to the dregs, Panchito then began: "No, ño Gregorio, my brother is not dead, and luckily only rides with a party of the Colorados who came upon us with our horses swimming the river, and waited for us to come out, just as a man sent forward in an ostrich hunt waits for the driven birds. My brother turned his horse to cross again, but as he did so, a party lined the bank we just had left, and took him prisoner at once. I let my hat drop in the stream to draw their fire, and threw myself beside my horse, and when we touched the shore, darted at once full speed into the woods. They fired, but missed me, and the trees prevented them from throwing 'bolas' at my horse. So here I am safe, tired and wet, with all our horses gone, and my poor brother

Cruz obliged to serve amongst the Colorados as long as General Lopez keeps the field."

As they sat talking, little by little the sun rose through the mist, which hung on every blade of grass and fell in drops off the low eaves of the estancia buildings, and clung about the coats of animals. Vizcachas peeped out timidly from their holes, and tucotucos sounded their last note from underneath the ground, before retiring for the day. Sheep bleated in the fold, and cattle, sleeping on the highest ground that they could find, stretched out their heads, but did not rise to eat, knowing the wet, white dew upon the grass would be injurious to them, whilst from the monté by the riverside the noise of myriads of birds just waking, filled the air with sound.

"Let us go out and meet the sun as do the accursed Indians in the far south of Buenos Ayres, where I once was a soldier," Gregorio said.

Rising, they went out to the door, and as they stood and scanned the plain, a noise of galloping fell on their ears.

"What have we done," Panchito said, "to irritate the Lord that he allows another band of these accursed Reds to visit us? Providence

surely cannot remember that our father was a White?"

Suddenly over a low hill a man appeared racing upon a barebacked horse, his knife between his teeth. After him swept a band of ragged soldiers, some getting out their "bolas" for a throw. Both onlookers recognised at once the rider and his horse.

"My brother Cruz." "Yes, on his blue roan horse," the capataz replied. Even as they spoke, the foremost soldier, with a long cast of the "bolas," caught the blue roan round the hind legs, and with a plunge or two he fell, and the pursuers gathered round their prey. Leaping upon their horses, the agonised onlookers scoured to the place, and just arrived to hear a sergeant say, "We must make an example; the young man has been once within our ranks; besides, his father was a cursed White . . . you negro there, dismount and cut his throat."

Pale and disordered with his fall, Cruz stood, disarmed and helpless, looking mechanically at the rising sun, knowing, he saw it, for the last time upon earth. Its light fell on his face, flushing his cheeks and bathing all the group of gauchos and their horses in its life-giving

rays. Facing about, the sergeant cried, "Keep those men back till I have finished with this dog," and then signing the negro forward, who advanced, drawing his knife and scenting blood, just as a wolf lays bare its fangs before he pounces on a lamb, with a quick movement threw the prisoner on his face, wrenched back his head, and plunged his dagger in his throat. With a convulsive movement and a whistling sound, as when the air is suddenly let out of a pricked bladder, the blood gushed out, staining the grass, and feet of the impassive gauchos who stood round. The victim's eyes glazed slowly, then turned back horribly, exposing all the white, and a convulsive grin deformed his features, whilst the negro pressed his body with his foot, just as a butcher presses the body of a sheep, to cause the blood to flow. A few convulsive movements of the legs showed life was passing, and then the body lay extended on the grass, helpless and limp, and looking like a bundle of old clothes.

The sergeant spoke the funeral oration, as the negro wiped his knife, saying, "The young man might have made a soldier, for he was brave, and was no miser of his throat."

Then they all mounted, lightly as a flock of

birds, and struck across the plain, their horses leaving a dark trail as they brushed through the dew-bespangled grass.

Panchito, slipping off, cast himself on his brother's body with a groan, mechanically throwing the reins over his horse's head, upon the ground to stop him moving off. The horse snorted a little at the fresh-spilt blood, and then stood like a statue, outlined and motionless against the sky, in the full glare of the new-risen sun.

A SAINT

The days of saints are past. We never see them in these latter times. Our eyes are just as slow to mark them as were the eyes of those who slew and tortured them in days gone by, giving them thus the chance of immortality and of a place apart, in calendars.

I knew one though, that is, if stripes and prisons oft, the scorn of men, a life of poverty and a pure nature, with a soul afire at all injustice, constitute a saint. As many of the breed were born in most unlikely places and surroundings, so was the one I knew, for I feel certain that he was a saint in truth, in deed, and thought and life, although no church has canonised his name. The race has sprung before, in palaces, in hovels, farms, in armies, convents, and again in towns, in country districts, and perhaps in gaols. But Cadiz, "Improba Gades," the laughing, whitewashed, sea-bound, salt-ringed town, which rises from the waves and seems to float, just as a nautilus

lies rocking in the trades, does not at first sight strike one as a cradle for a saint.

The little town of Hercules, built on its tongue of land jutting far out into the sea, and with the great black shoal, Las Puercas, standing sentinel just in the fairway of the port, with its long rows of dazzling houses chequered with bright green jalousies, its streets in which a crowd is never seen, in which the tramp of horses is not heard, sans trade, sans manufactures, peaceful, and seeming far removed from all the troubles of the world, does not seem fitting for the birth of one destined to struggle all his life.

Your perfect rebel, and there can be no saintliness without revolt in some shape or another against the myriad meannesses that dwarf mankind, makes his own struggle, if he but strives against himself. Easier far it would have been to have sunk into mere resignation (by that sin men have fallen deeper than even angels fell by pride), and to have found all fair, as did the Lord in Eden, till man appeared to break the spell. In the soft wind-swept, sea-lapped town, where stars come out like fireflies, pale, and sink back into the sky, and where day melts into the

night as imperceptibly as if it were a tide, it is so easy to forget.

Dressed in his unsubstantial, southern children's clothes, made out of stuff like bed-ticking, he must have gone to school, to some poor starveling schoolmaster (the hunger of a schoolmaster is a stock jest in Spain), or some old snuffy priest. Still, in his youth he could not but have showed the promise of his life, just as musicians and great painters composed and painted as soon as they could speak, for saintliness is of the nature of an art.

Even in Cadiz, with its quiet ways, its streets so shady in the heat, so sunny in the cold, its grass-grown plazas and its air as of a woman, fair in youth and yet more beautiful in age, the ordinary injustices of life must have revolted him.

The overladen ass, girth-galled and patient, treading its weary Calvary which leads it to no heaven, except the rest from toil that death affords, must have stirred all his blood. Cats tortured and dogs stoned, no doubt set all his childish nerves a-tingling and his sympathies on edge, as they do those of many children, but with the difference in his case

that the indignation lasted all his life, and did not settle down into that careless acquiescence that makes cowards of us all.

Whether he stood and whispered at the grated window, when he grew older, to some girl half seen, or, standing on the pavement, formed with his lips dumb words to some fair Gaditana on a balcony, I do not know, but I imagine that his only love was his old mother, and that, although throughout his life he never knew the name of fear, with women he was timid and did not know the worth of his timidity in women's eyes.

Fortune had given him a little manufactory of playing-cards, left by his father, which in a year or two of philanthropic management soon went to ruin, though I remember now and then, long years ago, to have remarked upon the ace of gold, in Cadiz packs, his name, and to have thought the cards were dingy and looked like blotting-paper. This hindrance to his life having been thus removed, the way was clear for him to run his course. Never again did he own property or any money, but what was necessary for the subsistence of his mother and himself, and that from day to day.

Thus being independent of the world, he naturally, after the fashion of his brother-saints, set out on his career to redress injustices, make things grown crooked, straight, and generally to court the martyrdom mankind is ever ready to inflict on all who do not put their necks beneath its yoke.

How he became an anarchist, that is to me unknown; but probably, after the fashion of his countrymen, more by experience of life, than by long poring upon books.

In such a little town as Cadiz, where everything is known, nothing but vice is possible to hide, and that but by the complicity of others, who shield their fellow-sinners for the need they have of them, his views were known to all, and he became a sort of bugbear to the population, who, in the vegetarian dreamer, saw a dangerous revolutionist, and yet received a pleasurable qualm as he passed by, feeling a pride their city had produced so terrible a man. As he walked through the streets, dressed in his threadbare suit of shoddy Barcelona tweed, a soft grey hat upon his head, with his weak eyes shielded by neutral-tinted spectacles, people stepped off the narrow pavement on to the cobble-stones and murmured, "There goes

Antichrist." Strange rumours that he maintained a correspondence with the murderers of the Czar gained ground, and sounded terrible to those who had the vaguest of ideas what a Czar really was, and in what portion of the globe Russia was situated. The police began to dog his footsteps, and to endeavour to get proof against him of some mysterious crime. Was it not patent to mankind that one who lived on bread and milk, who never smoked, or went to bull-fights, and whom no soul in Cadiz had ever seen emerge from out the narrow lane that leads down from the Paseo de Apodaca to the house where dwells La Barquillera and her nymphs, must be a man who cherished dark designs? No Christian ever would have taken to his house lost dogs or kittens, or stopped light hearted boys from putting out cats' eyes, and pouring paraffin upon them and setting it ablaze. Such practices the Church itself does not condemn, at least by precept, for it knows well that animals are not endowed with souls, and he who seeks to mitigate the torture of their lives is a mere heretic and well deserves the stake.

So, by degrees, the hero of my tale became unpopular with all right-thinking men, and

though he shared his pittance with the poor, the very men he helped distrusted him, for charity, although it suffereth long, is never popular.

A famine broke out in the south, with lack of rain for months, so that the earth dried up and cracked, and in the cracks millions of field rats bred, that, issuing from their holes, devoured the remnant of the crops the locusts and the drought had spared, and the sun turned to fire. Month after month it blazed upon the fields, drying the springs and rivers, and parching up the trees. Water was dearer far than wine, and in the little laughing town a hush fell on the streets, whilst in the country hunger stalked abroad and struck men to the ground. Then came the movement of "La Mano Negra," and the authorities, anxious to pay in full all that they owed to one who, in and out of season, always opposed all governments, arrested him and shipped him off incontinently to the Peñon de la Goméra, with shackles on his feet.

For years he sweltered in the sun, wearing the blue and white striped drill in which the Spanish Government dresses its convicts, on the coast. The little money that his mother sent him he laid out in tobacco for the

other convicts, who, used to what they called "the vice," were mad for want of it, and by degrees his fellow-prisoners grew to know him as The Saint. The school he started, teaching the rudiments of education on an old slate, is not forgotten in the wretched little place, which stands up like a miniature Gibraltar, united to the shore by a mere tongue of land.

Somehow or other he escaped, and wandered up and down for months amongst the tribes upon the Riff. Though as a general rule the Moors give up all convicts, except those who, as the phrase goes, "throw away their hats" and join their faith, they seem to have been impressed with the inherent goodness of this prisoner in especial, and passed him on from one tribe to another until he reached Tangier. The Spaniards, in their human, careless way, did not repatriate him to complete his sentence, but let him live as best he could by writing, teaching, and the other little industries of the unlucky man of education compelled to toil for bread.

Something took place in Spain—perhaps the unnecessary birth of some unnecessary prince, the marriage of a princess, or the like

event of national importance, and what is known as an "Indulto," that is, the letting out of prisoners (who should never have been sent to gaol) occurred, and once more he was free. His name was growing as a saint, that is, a man who had no vices and spent his life in doing good, but still was quite unfitted for the world he lived in, by his outrageous love of truth.

Then came a half rebellion, and though the saint of Cadiz was not in the town, some speeches he had made, served as a pretext to arrest him, and, once arrested, he was doomed to be condemned. Again he found himself in prison, though with the feeling of half Spain upon his side, after his speech in his defence.

Years dragged along, and though from time to time accounts leaked out of all that he endured, he might have rotted and been buried in a ditch had not a general pardon once more taken place. Broken in health and prematurely aged, he wandered back to Cadiz, just as a wounded animal returns to die where it was born, and as instinctively.

Those who had shunned him all his life now stopped him in the street, and warmly wrung his hands. Prosperous citizens saluted him, and he became an object of respect, just as

a conqueror is worshipped, after the victory is won.

As the sun rose he walked down to the beach, bathed and then basked a little in the sun, and wandering back again, ate with good appetite his bread and milk; and, sitting down to work, translated English scientific works for the Madrid or Barcelona Press at miserable pay.

Death took him quietly, coming as a friend, and in his only clothes, a worn and battered shoddy suit of tweed, his mother seated by his side, dressed in the livery of black that Spanish widows wear, her worn merino shawl setting her walnut-coloured face in a dark frame, he lay upon his bed.

All Cadiz blocked the street, and through the little whitewashed, flat-roofed house a long procession filed. Ladies in mourning, and workmen in their ordinary clothes, passed through and gazed at him, and at his mother sitting silently.

Some kissed his hand, and others, patting his mother on the shoulder, essayed to comfort her, just as a horse nestles its nose against the shoulder of its fellow, when he sees it is in pain.

Outside the house the "Comrades" waited in the sun, smoking and talking and spitting in the dust, without the show of grief we in the

north affect, but taking everything as natural which happens to a man.

Juan, Pedro, Gil, and Saturnino, taking off their hats, shouldered the bier, still smoking, and the procession took its way through the dark street of Columela, to the cemetery. Emerging on the alameda by the sea, it halted, and another band of "Comrades," brown, bullet-headed, and with their cigarettes either behind their ears or in their mouths, relieved the bearers, pushing their way through the thick crowd that swarmed on every side. Women in black, on every balcony, gazed silently, and as the body passed, signed themselves with the cross, making it first upon the breast, and then in miniature across the mouth. Again the bearers changed, and as they passed the cemetery gates, the civil guards, sitting like figures cut in walnut, on their high crested horses from Jeréz, saluted almost as if by instinct, their captain looking vacantly before him, so that discipline was saved.

Pushing its way through the dense mass of people, the bier arrived before the grave.

Around it stood a group of workmen, with here and there a person like a schoolmaster

out of employment, dressed in black, faded clothes. When the grave had been filled, the sandy soil falling like hail on the cheap coffin lid, a man stood out, and plunged immediately into a maze of words about the virtues of the dead, the rich, the poor, the social revolution, and the glorious red flag. He ceased, amid some rather faltering applause, and a rough comrade took up his parable, his eloquence at times just touching folly, and his folly rising occasionally to eloquence. He finished, sweating and hoarse, muttering, " . . . he was a saint . . . Adios Firmin . . . long live the social revolution . . . long live anarchy."

The ground was beaten in upon the grave, on which the blows of mattock and of spade fell heavily, just as the blows of fortune had descended all his life, on the man resting underneath. The crowd dispersed, and in an hour, once more the town had taken on again its air of emptiness, and in the streets the women walked swinging and balancing upon their hips, just as a square-rigged vessel sways and balances, with a light, leading wind.

AT THE RIVER

Along the bank of the brown, swirling, southern river fringed with tamarisks, the army straggled, in a confused, tumultuous mass. The sun was sinking slowly, although there remained an hour or two of light. Alone on a white horse, in the fine rain that hung like dew upon his fleecy haik, the Sultan sat, leaning back lazily against the cantle of his high red saddle, and looking at his army with an air half of amusement, mixed with boredom and yet with some remains of pride, as if he felt he was, out there in the brown sand, close to the rushing water, underneath the sky, and in the middle of the half-nomadic horde, more the Commander of the Faithful, than in his palaces at Fez or Mequinéz.

His umbrella-bearer on a chestnut horse with a white tail and mane, and seared with marks of firing against contingent equine maladies, sat with the umbrella folded, letting the raindrops trickle from the folds. The men who trot beside the Sultan on the march,

sprawled about carelessly upon the sand. The infantry in dark blue jackets and pink or scarlet trousers to the knees, barefooted and with ragged fezes on their heads, were huddled like a flock of sheep, all in disorder, carrying their rifles with fixed bayonets, or in any way they chose; their officers, dressed in half-Turkish, half-European uniforms, looked just like monkeys on a barrel-organ, seated on their enormous Moorish saddles which need the haik or the burnoose to make them picturesque.

Behind the infantry came a confused and mixed-up mass of horsemen, drawn from the tamer Arab tribes. All wore their national dress of dusky white, and all sat on their wild-eyed horses, as only those who pass their lives on horseback sit, easy and unconstrained and swaying to the slightest movement, with the set features and the roving glance of men accustomed to look out upon a wide horizon, and to behold an enemy in everything that moves.

They held their guns upright like spears, or else beneath their thighs between the saddle and the girth, in the same manner that the Spaniards and the Mexicans have taken from them, together with the long and open reins,

the bit with solid curb, and the light way of mounting in one motion, just as a bird starts on its flight without an effort that the eye can see, so different from the uncouth gymnastics of the civilised, when they climb on a horse.

No one dismounted, though the army had been halted almost for an hour during the time the Sultan was receiving a deputation from a tribe, which came, bringing an offering of sheep and oxen and a long train of covered dishes piled high with couscoussou. Some of the horsemen sprawled flat upon their horses' necks, and others sat, one leg across the pommel of the saddle, and now and then a man twitched his bit sharply, when a shrill scream proclaimed that someone had allowed his horse to approach too near his neighbour's, and a fight was imminent. Three or four mountain guns, on camels, constituted the artillery, and in the rear an heterogeneous mass of tribesmen, of women, negroes, and all the flotsam and the jetsam which in North Africa accompanies an army on the march, on foot, on horseback, perched on asses and on mules, waited impassively, just as they had arrived upon the river's bank, till orders came to cross. Upon the flank of the strange, wild battalions a little

to the right the Sultan's baggage mules had halted, fine, fat beasts, bearing his tents, his treasures, and the necessary rubbish that in Morocco every Sultan always has carried on the road. A guard of tribesmen from the south attended them, thin, wiry men, whose tattered haiks were all dyed brown with sand. Some of them carried hooded hawks behind them on a pad, which swayed and balanced, as their owners' horses moved, just as a man sways with the motion of a ship. Each chief had his own train of baggage animals upon a smaller scale, which were mingled with the rest and huddled round his flag, just as the Sultan's personal attendants were grouped about the blood-red banner, which once the Salée rovers flaunted on the sea.

Some European officers, dressed in fine uniforms of scarlet cloth, over which hung a light and fleecy white selhám, their heads adorned with the round Turk's-head turban which only members of the Government may wear, were near the Sultan, and now and then he talked to them, about photography, the Röntgen rays, and all the wonders to be seen in Paris and in London, and the delights of Europe, which he, by the virtue of his holy

station, could but behold in newspapers; but which appeared, by virtue of their unattainability, a thousand times superior to the delights he knew.

And as they sat and talked, the army gradually became mixed up with the camp followers, and the long straggling lines of pimp-faced, pink-clad infantry sat down upon the sand, sheltering themselves in groups of twos and threes, under a haik held up by rifle-barrels. A non-commissioned officer, dressed in dark blue, with brown bare legs, and with his European boots slung round his neck, stepped to the baggage mules, and drawing out a tray of sweets went from group to group calling out, "Ya Muley Edris," the cry with which the sweetmeat sellers hawk their wares in Fez.

Trade never has dishonoured in the East, at least amongst the Arabs, so a grave smile flitted across the Sultan's negroid features as he turned sideways on his fat white horse and watched the faithful buy from the huckstering sergeant, as he moved through the ranks.

The European officers were scandalised, but in response to their remonstrances about the lack of discipline, that discipline which makes machines of men, the easy-going Sultan

answered that it was but a custom of the country, and they, knowing the man they had to deal with, sat straight upon their horses, looking as mortified as he who sees a miscreant enter a church and put his hat upon the altar, for custom is as great a tyrant in the West as in the East, and that which outrages it appears as blasphemy to every sort of men.

At last the guides who had been sent to explore the ford, and see if it were passable, returned, and said it would just serve, but that the stream ran deep. All was now hurry and confusion, and the mixed, heterogeneous mass of men and animals stood waiting for the word.

The sun began to slant amongst the rain-clouds, towards the white roofs and towers of Azimúr, about a league away, just shining like a fleecy cloud, where the plain shades into the sea, as a long train of camels, bearing enormous burdens, slowly came up and joined the army halted on the bank.

Gently they sailed along, like great Dutch galliots, their noiseless footsteps giving them an air of flight. From side to side they swayed, their packs looking like sails, and seeming to sustain them in the air. Beside

them walked their drivers, men brown and lean, sun-dried and spare of frame as was the youth Mohammed, before Allah had marked him out to drive his Arabs on the path of victory, ordained by Him, when He created time. Lastly, there came a negro riding on an ass, instinct with the true dignity to which only a fool attains, his snow-white clothes seeming still whiter, against his blue-black skin, scurfy and rough as is the hide of some great water buffalo or hippopotamus. With the true Oriental unconcern for dignitaries the negro halted his caravan a hundred yards or so from where the Sultan sat upon his horse. The camels kneeled, sinking down as it were by sections, the packs standing out for a moment like huge hummocks, and then subsiding on the sand. The Sultan, always craving after something new, asking from life more than it has to give, and finding nothing interesting, because he always looked for something non-existent in the marvels that surrounded him on every side, signed to an officer and sent him off to ask what merchandise was carried in the packs. After the lengthy interval which, throughout North Africa, it would be wanting in respect for anyone charged with a message to abridge,

the messenger returned. "Bianos," he said, were what the camels bore, and then explained they were a kind of Christian instrument, with an infinity of notes, which played strange music, which to the faithful sounded like the howling of a dog. The Sultan, after listening to the man, as if he had forgotten all about the camels and their packs, said with a shade of interest, "It is well, bring me a 'Biano,' I want to play that tune I learned from the French dentist who was in Fez a year or two ago, and put the bits of gold into the ladies' teeth, which made me laugh so when I looked at them." Then he sat back upon his horse, throwing the ends of his long silken reins across his shoulder, whilst on his face there came a look of interest, which the sight of his army waiting a sign from him to cross the river, had been impotent to raise. In vain his European officers, the only men of all the host who dared to raise a protest, argued against the loss of time; the Commander of the Faithful still replied to all their arguments, "Bring me the Biano, I want to play on it." In haste a French mechanic and an English groom were sent for, as being men able to deal with every kind of mechanism, whether of beast or man.

In a rough halting Arabic interspersed with oaths of their respective countries, they set a gang of Arabs to undo the cases, and the component parts of a grand piano, looking like bones of some gigantic fossil animal, were laid upon the sand. The knot of Europeans stood apart disgusted at the loss of time, the certain ruin of the piano, and the futility of the proceeding, which in their eyes was almost criminal, trained as they were to order, and to regard things that had cost much money, far above human life. The army, on the other hand, took it as natural, and interesting, for almost every man who waited by the river's bank would certainly have done the same, had he but had the might. Time was of no account to them, for even if the army crossed at night nothing more serious could happen than the drowning of a score or two of men, and loss of baggage animals, a thing ordained by Allah, and against which it would be impious to strive. Quickly the body of the instrument was set upright, the other pieces put into their places, and the great concert grand by Broadwood stood a little tilting to one side, but still fit to be played on by a monarch, in the light drifting rain. A thrill of expectation ran through every-

one, though no one dared to approach the instrument, the first-fruit of our European culture, thrown out by progress as a defiance to the old world, in which music is made upon an earthern drum with ends of parchment, a rude reed pipe, or a long three-stringed guitar, with the neck stuck into a calabash.

Slowly the Sultan rode his horse up to the spot, dismounted, and, as the wet trickled down from his haik, stood like the Lord in Eden, and, looking at his handiwork, proclaimed that it was good. One difficulty more still lay between him and the accomplishment of his desire. The key was lost, and though the music waited for his touch, a lid of rosewood still veiled the keyboard, keeping the Sultan still apart from his enjoyment, waiting impatient as a bridegroom waits for the disrobing of the bride. Signing mimetically to a soldier who stood near, the man advanced, and driving his bayonet underneath the lid, it opened, carrying the brass plate on the lock with it, and clanging back upon the body of the piano with a loud jarring sound.

Gravely the lineal descendant of Mohammed stood by, as careless of the eyes fixed on him, of the approaching night, the rain, and every-

thing, either in heaven or earth, as he had been alone, upon the plain.

After a moment of reflection, as if collecting all his energies, he ran his hand across the keys, and then slowly, and with one finger, and making several wrong notes, picked out the Spanish Royal March. Then, closing the lid down with a bang, walked to his horse, which had remained watching him gravely, and mounting in one motion, raised himself in his saddle for his attendants to arrange his haik, and signing with his hand, his European officers and his Kaids, his umbrella-bearer, and the men who run beside his stirrup, gathered about him, and without turning to the army, rode down into the stream. The water foamed about their horses, banking up on the stream side, until their saddles almost were awash, whilst the fierce current bore them struggling sideways, sitting immovably with their eyes fixed upon the further bank. There they emerged, and stood like statues in the sand, watching the army cross like a great shoal of porpoises, shouting and struggling in the stream, the smaller luggage animals swimming, whilst men guided them by the tails, or walked above them to break the current's force, holding their guns above their heads.

The camels followed gravely, their slender necks making them look like some vast water serpent, rising from the flood. Soon all had crossed, and on the sand, in the light, penetrating rain, the piano stood alone, looking ridiculous, but somehow menacing, as if the halting air that had been forced reluctantly from its insulted keys had been the death-note of the old, wild barbaric life which had surged past it, and now was swallowed up in mist.

BU GIDRI

The little holes which seamed his rugged Berber face had given him the title of the Father of Small-pox, which he—after the fashion of his countrymen, who take all, rain, wind, sun, good and bad fortune, wounds, prison, mutilation, even death itself, as being actual and direct manifestations of the Will Divine—had cheerfully accepted, and bore as uncomplainingly as he had borne the illness from which he took his name. Half Pagan, half Mohammedan, (after the fashion of the race from which most likely sprang St. Augustine), although he thought himself a firm believer, Bu Gidri was employed as soldier in the British consulate at Fez. Dressed in the Arab clothes which rarely suit a Berber, for the two races are as distinct as are the English and the French, he strove, though mean of stature and appearance, to look a swaggerer, and had grown the two long locks on either temple which are the outward visible sign of the official

of the court. His pointed fez, and sword cocked up behind in the Arab style, gave him an air as of a monkey on a barrel-organ. Such was his outward mien, but those who knew him, knew that he was brave, staunch, obstinate as a mule, and one of those able to knock a nail into a plank by beating on it with his forehead, and then, if the necessity arose, to draw it with his teeth. Being a Berber, he had the catlike love of places, unknown to Arabs, who for the most part live and die, as it were on a journey, sleeping and dying on the road. Their very cemeteries are often unenclosed, and merely set about with pieces of rough stone, through which run short-cuts, death-traps to horsemen, who, trusting to the will of God, at night cross them at highest speed, knowing that those who sleep below the stones all were bold riders to a man.

Withal, Bu Gidri was an honest and a conscientious man, one that no gold could buy, a thing unknown amongst the Arabs, with whom a key of gold opens all locks. Slow-witted, but tenacious of ideas when once they filtered through his skull into his brain, those who employed him knew him for a man to send upon a desperate errand should the neces-

sity arise, certain that he would reach the place to which they sent him, or die upon the quest.

One portion of his life was shut from all mankind, although he was not so impenetrable as are the Arabs, with whom a frank exterior serves as a water-tight bulkhead between them and the world. At times, when asked about "his house"—the formula employed by Mussulmans when asking after one another's families—he would launch into details, and say that "she" was well, and then, pull himself up and stammer and drift off into praises of his little boy, who he averred, with the innocent fatuity of fathers, Mohammedan and Christian alike, was quite a paragon.

To the outward eye, the marvel was a dirty little boy in a torn yellow shirt, barefooted and black-eyed, and with a little close-shaved bullet-head, on which you could have struck a match had it not here and there been spotted with a white eruption, nauseous to behold. But, for his reticence about his family affairs he quite made up by his garrulity about a certain little pacing pony that he had bought in the Ait-Yusi country, and which he swore could go from Fez to Tangier in three days, and that, so smoothly that he could carry in

his hand a glass of water and never spill a drop. This equine wonder was a cow-hocked and fiddle-headed beast, of a light cream colour with black points, and had an eye bloodshot and dangerous-looking, which did not in the least belie his temper, for to approach him was to expose oneself to be kicked or bitten, or to receive a blow from his fore feet, which if it carried home would have been fatal, for rising up, he used to launch his feet into the air, just as a boxer hits, and scream with fury, if he did not know his man. Once saddled and the Moorish bit jammed home between his yellow teeth, which operation usually entailed tying his feet together with a rope, or putting on a twitch, he then became as gentle as a sheep, after the way of many horses in the East.

Tied to a tree or post, nodding his head, with the flies clustered in bunches round his eyes, the high red Arab saddle towering like a howdah on his back, he looked fitted for nothing, but to draw water from a well. Yet when his master got upon his back (which feat he executed indifferently from either side, holding his gun, full five feet long, enclosed in a red case), and drove the edge of the sharp Arab stirrup into his belly, he pricked his long lop

ears and a light shone in his red eye which gave a promise of interior graces not revealed by his exterior, impressing you, just as St. Paul when he had begun to launch into his theme must have impressed the men of Athens, who had despised the ugly little Jew. Still, with defects and all, he was the apple of Bu Gidri's eye, and though he seldom rode him, but for powder-play, when he would gallop him about as if possessed, wheeling and turning on the strong Arab bit just as a gull turns wheeling in the air, it yet was his delight to tend him and, above all, to talk about his powers. Most of his time the horse spent in a yard, exposed to rain and snow, up to his fetlocks in the mud in winter, and in the heat a prey to flies, and screaming savagely if any other horse came near him, as he laid back his ears.

His master during the daytime generally sat inside the doorway of the British Consulate, looking at nothing, now and then drinking a cup of sweet green tea flavoured with leaves of mint. His duties sometimes took him to the post office or to some other consulate, and now and then mounted upon his horse, his gun in hand, he rode behind the consul into the

country to a picnic, his features fixed and impressionless, with his blue cloth "selham," which if he had but been an Arab would have been draped in graceful folds or flown behind him as he rode, swathing his body like a shroud.

Never in all his time of service, which had extended over years, had he been sick or sorry, or been away upon a holiday, so that one morning when he appeared, expressionless as usual, to ask permission to be absent for a week to go to Tangier, he got it willingly. Thanking the consul in the unceremonious way a man returns his thanks in countries like Morocco—where, if permission is not given at once, the man who asks, usually takes it on himself to grant it—he said, as if the thing had happened to another, "My son is dead; little Hamido whom you knew. I want to bury him amongst my people, after the fashion of my folk." Without a word about the will of Allah, which, had he been an Arab, he would have quoted gravely, partly to show his faith and partly to conceal his grief, he turned and left the room. What passed that afternoon in the mysterious interior of his house only himself could tell. Early next morning, just as the furtive streaks of red

which split the sky into a sort of pattern had appeared, about an hour before the dawn, the sleepy gatewards in the dark passage under the massive archway of the Bab-el-Gizeh saw him strike into the road.

Mounted upon his pacing nag, his gun beneath his thigh, and balancing a little bundle wrapped in white rags upon the pommel of his saddle, he twitched his bridle, making the pony toss his head, and change his feet twice or thrice hurriedly before he fell into his pace.

The crenellated walls of Fez, flanked here and there by towers, on which stood storks asleep upon one leg, or flapping lazily as the dawn slowly crept across the sky, ran on the right, and on the left a vast flat plain, dotted with tents which sprang like mushrooms from the sandy soil, extended to a range of hills, now wreathed in mist through which the scattered houses just appeared, ghostly and white, and dripping with the dew. When he had passed beyond the walls he turned, and, looking back at Fez, saw it rise from the sandy hollows where it lies, transformed and glorious, dazzlingly white as is a water-lily, silent and ghostly in the early morning air, with every marking on the houses and the mosques so clear and

well defined that it appeared that he could touch them with his hand. Rising a little in the saddle, he settled all his clothes, then pressed the stirrup in his pony's flank, who whisked his tail and struck into a pace between a trot and canter, swaying his rider to and fro, just like a camel, as he shuffled through the sand.

Muffled in his white haik, which swathed him like a mummy, silent and sorrowful, bearing his little dusky bundle balancing between his body and the pommel of his high red saddle, the pony's footsteps deadened in the sand, Bu Gidri passed so quietly through the now sunlit plain, that he appeared like death on his pale horse, prowling round stealthily to mark his prey. All day he paced along, jerking his pony's mouth occasionally after the Arab fashion, making the bridle ring against his teeth when the beast broke his pace or seemed to weary, and with his stirrup pressed into its side. He passed the great red hill, traversing first the sandy lanes, hedged on both sides with aloes, and then the wood of olives, till he stood on the ridge, from which Fez looks like a mere blotch of dazzling whiteness floating in the air. The noonday heat caught him close to a brick-

arched well, beside which springs a palm tree, with its roots in water and its head in fire.

Lighting down carefully as must a man who wears voluminous clothes and keeps his slippers on by a perpetual contraction of the feet, he led his horse into the shade, balancing carefully the precious bundle on the saddle with his other hand. Laying it down upon a stone, he pulled his horse towards him sharply by the tail to see if it stood firm and had not felt the five hours' steady work upon the road, then loosening the girths, he put the hobbles on its feet and let it browse upon the scanty grass which grew about the well. Then sitting down he ate a piece of brown and gritty bread, moistening his thumb to gather up the crumbs, not on account of hunger, but from the sacred character bread has amongst the Moors, who hold it impious to waste a particle of the chief blessing God has given man.

Kief, smoked in a minute and curiously shaped pipe, the stem of which was a light cane about a foot in length, carved in concentric patterns, he fell into that state of half contemplation, half of dreaminess, which overtakes all those who have the habit, and then, rising to drink a little water, tightened his

girths, bitted his pony, and swinging slowly into his high saddle, leaned back against the cantle, rubbed his stiff knees, and once again took up his march, refreshed by his brief halt.

Night overtook him at the Hájara Cherifa, on the Sebou, where he entered a zariba, and, after looking to his horse, sat talking of the price of barley, the doings of the tribes, always either in rebellion or ready to break out, till food was ready, and after eating heartily of the wheaten porridge, known as couscoussou, threw out more barley for his horse upon a saddle-cloth, and lying down close to him, fell into the broken sleep usual to horsemen on a solitary ride. During the night he woke occasionally, and watched his horse munching his corn, and later, standing sleeping, resting a leg, and with one ear laid back upon his neck.

Long before daylight he had saddled up, and joined a caravan to cross the river, which lay deep down below the village, a mere white ribbon in the mist. Slowly, the train of horses and of mules, followed by a long string of camels, slithered and stumbled down the slope. At first they crossed a tract of stones, on which grew tamarisks, stunted and broken by the browsing of the goats, then they passed several branches

of the stream, and lastly entered the main channel, which, grey and cold, brawled through the stones, affording a precarious footing for the beasts.

Pressing in front, Bu Gidri passed the river with the water to his saddle-skirts, the current edging his horse sideways, until he reached the bank. The pony scaled it like a cat, just stopping at the top to shake the water from his coat, and as his rider turned to see the others cross, the dawn just lit up the encircling hills, making the tops float in the mist, mysterious, and looking like extinct volcanoes in the moon. It fell upon the rock from which the crossing takes its name, of Hájara Cherifa, and showed it standing gaunt, a natural obelisk upon the plain, a palm tree growing at its base, and giving it an air as of a temple, raised by nature to some strange deity, never yet known to man.

Leaving the caravan, Bu Gidri pushed on over the stony plain, crossing the Ardatz and the Wergha, high up in their course, where they present an infinity of little streams, meandering through sheets of pebbles, and came by noonday, with his horse still full of strength, to where a stream just issues from a

ruined Roman wall. Fish played about the entrance of the pool, and, as the shadow of the horseman fell upon the water, they darted back into the dark recesses of the arch. There he passed the hottest hours, waiting for when the sun, the enemy of man in Africa, should fall a little—and once again pushed on.

The heat rose from the stones as from a lime-kiln heated to its extremest point, and with his head bowed in his haik he still pushed onwards, the sweat dripping from off his horse's belly, and drying white and saltish on his coat. At times Bu Gidri crooned a high-pitched Berber song, but always kept a watchful eye on the horizon, just as a sailor scans the sea, observing nothing near him, but on the watch for anything unusual on the limit of his view. The setting sun saw him just passing down the steep red track, from where, amongst the orange gardens, Alcázar just appears set in its woods and cultivated grounds, a league or two away. Fear fell upon him that he should find the gates all closed against him, for he knew well that raiding mountaineers from Gibel Zarzar and the adjoining hills made the outskirts of the town dangerous at night to him who sleeps alone.

So he pressed on, after a good look at his horse, and after feeling him sharply in the mouth, to try his spirit, with the fixed look and constant shogging of the feet, which come upon a horseman, all unknown to him, towards the evening of a long march, when there is still a mile or two to do before the sun has set.

Nobly the pacing pony answered to his call, switching his scraggy tail, and scurrying along the road so smoothly that the little bundle scarcely moved, just kept in place by a light pressure of the rider's hand. He reached the Koos, which runs between high banks, and where the ford makes a great horseshoe bend, to avoid the fury of the stream. Putting its feet together in a bunch, the pony slithered down the muddy bank, and in a moment Bu Gidri found himself contending with the flood.

The men who hang about the ford to help the passers-by and to point out the passage, had returned to town, leaving the river desolate, grey, foaming, and broken into rapids here and there, the outer one of which was certain death to the unwary horseman who should essay to cross. Carefully fixing both his eyes upon a tree which stood out on the further bank, he spurred his pony into the

deeper water, which in the twilight seemed about to overwhelm him as it banked up upon the weather side, and flowed across the saddle for a step or two. Then suddenly it shallowed, and entering the slack water Bu Gidri waded to the bank, and, coming out amongst the orange gardens on the top, set his horse galloping, and did not stop till he came to the gate, which he found almost about to close, and passed into the town just as the call to evening prayer rang out from the high towers cased in dark metallic tiles, which rise like lighthouses from the flat sea of yellow houses and the thatched negro huts. Only some sixty miles were left to ride, so he slept well, and rising early took his way across the black alluvial plain, where by the Wad M'hassen runs the long bridge which marks the battlefield on which the ill-fated King of Portugal was slain, although some look for him still to come back and claim his kingdom, after three hundred years. Knowing he now could reach his village in good time, Bu Gidri rode along less anxiously, his pony eating the road, as say the Arabs, like clockwork, pacing so steadily that his master never felt the pace, which seemed to skim the surface of the ground just as a sledge flies on

the surface of the snow. Towards evening he crossed the Ackbal Hamara, leading his horse down the steep, craggy track that comes out on the plain. He passed Ain Dallia, and then in an hour more, upon a little hill, rode into the sea breeze, which seemed like coming into paradise, after a day or two in hell.

He reached his village outside Tangier, just at nightfall and dismounted at a house. Almost at daybreak he was afoot with one or two companions and an old woman whom he had hired to wail beside the grave. With hoes they hacked a hole in the rough stony village cemetery, and quite impassively Bu Gidri laid the bundle in the grave; the woman broke out into a shrill, ear-piercing lamentation, and the brief ceremony was at an end. All day he lounged about Tangier smoking a pipe or two of kief, and drinking tea occasionally, to show he was in town. Next morning saw him on the road, and on the eighth day after leaving Fez, the consul, going to his office, found him at his post seated at the front door, and with an air as of a man who has performed a duty, sheepish, self-satisfied, and just a little blackened by the sun.

AN ARAB FUNERAL

A SOUND of chanting filled the streets as a small white-clad group of men carrying a body, high on an open bier, passed through the town. The dusky haik that swathed the corpse, outlined its angles, making it look just like a sculptor's sketch in clay, covered with linen and damped to keep it wet.

The bearers, chosen at random, of all heights and ages, stumbled along, now trotting and again walking with the peculiar swing the flowing Arab clothes give to a mass of men upon the march. As the procession made its way through the streets, filthy with refuse, and past the market where the blood of animals left on the stones had formed a purple mud, the people whom it passed, scarcely appeared to notice it, as if the funeral merely were an incident in the long journey of the lives, so many of them pass upon the road. A casual European looked with interest, his hand rising involuntarily towards his hat, then stopped upon the way, feeling

uncertain how his salutation might be received ; but the compatriots and co-religionists of the dead man, lying so stiffly underneath his haik, bought, sold, and talked of money (their favourite theme) unmoved, trusting in God to stay His hand toward themselves, and give them a long day. Yellow and wolfish dogs ran in and out between the bearers' legs, and no one cursed them, as Europeans do on lesser provocation, and as the bier was borne into the open market-place, it found itself entangled in a crowd of people all dressed exactly in the same white rags that their dead brother wore. So thick the people swarmed that the procession halted several times, to let them separate. Long strings of camels, bearing bales covered up with brown and white striped rugs, swayed past it, their heads towering above the bier, at which they looked with the grave curiosity that seems to stamp them as inhabitants of a world older than is our own. Asses and mules carrying great nets packed hard with straw pressed on the mourners, and on the bier itself, as they passed by, and now and then the mass of human beings opened sullenly to let a horseman pass, who, upright in his saddle, appeared

to kneel upon his horse, in his short stirrup-leathers. Huts made of sacking or of old blankets, lined the road which cut the market into two, and by them, squatted their owners selling charcoal, bundles of firewood, vegetables and fruit. Men carrying goat-skins full of water, and a brass cup in their left hands, tinkling a bell, trudged to and fro, now and then stopping to pour out a cupful and receive a copper coin infinitesimally small. Over the press there hung the scent as of wild beasts distinctive of crowds in the East, and dust and particles of horse-dung floated in the air, making it pungent and difficult to breathe.

The market passed, the funeral took its way through the town gates into the open country, which, when a belt of gardens had been crossed, stretched out a waste of stones. The cemetery, built by the fostering care of the French conquerors more than a mile beyond the walls, surrounded by a high white wall and set about with European trees which drooped in the fierce sun, stood out gaunt, modern, and as unlike as possible to an Arab burying-ground with its rough slabs of stones, crossed by innumerable footpaths and browsed upon by goats.

Emerging on the stony plain, from which the sun gave back its heat a hundredfold, the mourners halted and changed bearers, chanting the whole time in a minor key. Their flowing dusky clothes blended exactly with the landscape, on which the sun poured down a flood of light so white that every colour disappeared, and the corpse on its bier appeared suspended in the air, or left alone, as if it were the grave of some Araphoé or Apaché chief, left on four stakes to moulder, so absolutely the carrying figures melted into the stones.

Once more they started, and their chant in the thin air just reached the ear, fine and high-pitched as a mosquito's song. They seemed to fly, their feet just brushing on the road, in the half-mirage raised by the heat and rising from the ground. The bier swayed to and fro, but gently, just as a rider sways upon a pacing horse, and the procession, white and unearthly-looking, floated towards its goal, as if borne by the wind.

So, for a little space there came an air as of romance over the last act connected with a man who perhaps in life had been a petty shopkeeper, or perhaps one of those nameless brawling Arabs who in the market-place of any

town in Barbary, jangle and shout the livelong day, sit in a café drinking green tea if by the merest chance they have a penny, and sleep at night upon the cobble stones at a street corner, or lie with other waifs in the "m'darsa" of the mosque.

Nature was making up to him, although he knew it not, and probably would not have cared even if he had known, for his life's sordidness and want. As you looked out upon the fleeting spectacle, so cloudlike and so similar to life itself, hurrying along the road towards the cemetery, the thought occurred, what if it is the last stage of the journey that some wandering tribesman is making through the world?

Then, as if confirmation of the idea was wanted and to make the simile complete, the bearers once more halted, laying the bier upon the ground and sitting down to rest. Only a fragmentary note or two of the wild chanting now reached the ear, deadened by passing through the semi-tropical belt of garden land planted with palm trees, apricots that grew as high as elms, and with bananas, and those so faint and so disjointed that they appeared as if they had been wafted from afar, and that the actual little group seated amidst the stone-

strewn landscape had no reality and was an image of a scene projected on the sky, as by a mirage in the Sáhara.

Once more they took their burden up, and once again their drapery fluttered as they trotted on, but now all in a mass, and the high bier had faded out of sight against the stones. They passed between high rocks, and then once more came out upon the plain, always a little nearer to the cemetery. Then, as they neared it, once more they came into full view, their dusky clothes standing out clearly against its whitewashed walls. A green gate opened, and they entered and were lost to sight, leaving the gazer from the town walls uncertain whether they had really passed before his view, or had been but a figment of the brain, or a refraction on the retina accustomed to the various scenes of Arab life. Around the shallow grave no doubt they stood, after their custom, chanting their testimony of belief in the One God, which moulds their faith but does not influence their works. Lastly, the corpse was lowered from the bier, and lay, looking pathetically small in its white wrappings, in the hot sandy soil which had so often been its bed in life. Then, without waiting,

whilst the others still intoned the versicle "No God, but God," the noblest, baldest statement of belief that man has yet devised, three or four took the mattocks with which the grave-diggers had wrought the grave, and filled it, shovelling down the sand and stones upon the corpse, which seemed to shiver as it felt their weight, and shrink into the ground. They shed no tears, for to have done so would have been to doubt of Allah's wisdom—Allah the merciful, the compassionate, He who had breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the dead believer for a spell, and then withdrawn it, as it seemed good to Him. When all was done, and a small sandy mound was raised over the body, and then edged round with stones, they stood a moment silently gazing on the ground. Then sitting down, some on the bier and others on the sand, they once more raised their chant, wailing and long-drawn-out, sounding as if the soul of the dead man still fluttered round about the spot, bewailing its disseverance from the flesh, which alone gave it feeling and existence, if ever it had lived.

Long they sat singing, chiefly in verses from the Kóran; verses affirming their belief; belief in Him who chose the Praised One as His

prophet, and let him in his youth guide camels, so that the experience thus gained would stand him in good stead, when it was time for him to guide mankind. Hours passed, and then in groups they sauntered back towards the town, emerging from the cemetery bathed in the evening light, glorious and statuesque in their white robes. Then as they neared the town, and as the setting sun fell on their backs, the halo which it had thrown upon them far away dispersed, they passed the gates, a group of dirty Arabs, carrying some boards and chattering loudly as they trotted through the sand.

MEKTUB

All Tangier knew the Rubio, the fair-haired blind man, who sat upon the mounting-block outside the stables of the principal hotel. His bright red hair and bleared blue eyes, together with his freckled face, looking just like a newly scalded pig, had given him the name by which the Europeans knew him, although no doubt he was Mohammed, something or another, amongst his brethren in the faith.

He spoke indifferently well most European languages up to a point, and perfectly as far as blasphemy or as obscenity was concerned, and his quick ear enabled him as if by magic to ascertain the nationality of any European passer-by, if ever he had spoken to the man before, and to salute him in his mother-tongue.

All day he sat, amused and cheerful, in the sun. Half faun, half satyr, his blindness kept him from entire materialism, giving him sometimes a half-spiritual air, which possibly may have been but skin deep, and of the nature of

the reflection of a sunset on a dunghill; or again, may possibly have been the true reflection of his soul as it peeped through the dunghill of the flesh.

As people passed along the road, their horses slithering and sliding on the sharp pitch of the paved road, which dips straight down from underneath the mounting-block of the hotel, between the tapia walls, over which bougainvilleas peep, down to the Soko Grande, El Rubio would hail them, as if he had been a dark lighthouse, set up to guide their steps.

Occasionally, but rarely, he mistook his mark, hailing some European lady with obscenity, or bawling to the English clergyman that he could tell him "where one fine girl live, not more than fifteen year"; but his contrition was so manifest, when he found his mistake, that no one bore him malice, and he remained an institution of the place and a perpetual rent-charge on all passers-by.

By one of the strange contradictions which Nature seems to take delight in just to confound us, when after a few thousand years of study we think we know her ways, the Rubio had a love of horses which in him replaced the usual love of music of the blind. No one

could hold two or three fighting stallions better, and few Moors in all the place were bolder riders—that is, on roads he knew. Along the steep and twisting path that leads towards Spartel he used to ride full speed and shouting "Balak" when he was sent upon a message or with a horse from town out to the villas on the hill. All those who knew him left him a free road, and if he met a herd of cattle or of sheep, the horse would pick his way through them, twisting and turning of his own accord, whilst his blind rider left the reins upon his neck and galloped furiously. In what dark lane or evil-smelling hole he lived no European knew. Always well dressed and clean, he lived apart both from the Moors and from the Europeans, and in a way from all humanity, passing his time, as does a lizard, in the sun and in the evening disappearing to his den. The missions of the various true faiths, Catholic, Presbyterian, and Anglican, had tackled him in vain. Whether it was that none of them had anything to offer which he thought better than the cheerful optimism with which he was endowed by nature to fight the darkness of the world he lived in, is difficult to say. Still, they had all been worsted; not

that the subject of their spiritual blandishments could have been termed a strict Mohammedan, for he drank any kind of spirits that was presented to him by Christians, anxious perhaps to make him break the spirit, if they were impotent to move him in the letter of his law. Still though he sat with nothing seemingingly reflected on the retina of his opaque and porcelain-coloured eyes, his interior vision was as keen or keener than that of other men. He never seemed a man apart, or cut off from his fellows, but had his place in life, just as throughout the East the poorest and most miserable appear to have, not barred out from mankind by mere externals as are their brethren in the North, shut in the ice of charity, as bees are shut behind a plate of glass so that the rich may watch their movements in the hive.

Up from the Arab market over which he sat, as it were, presiding in his darkness, just as God seems to sit, presiding blindly, over a world which either mocks Him, or is mocked at by Him, there came a breath of Eastern life, bearing a scent compounded of the acrid sweat of men, dried camel's dung, of mouldering charcoal fires, of spices, gunpowder, and of a thousand simples, all brought together by mere

chance or fate, a sort of incense burned in his honour, and agreeable to his soul. It seemed to bring him life, and put him into touch with all he could not see, but yet could feel, almost as well as if he saw, just as did other men.

Sniffing it up, his nostrils would dilate, and then occasionally a shadow crossed his face, and as he ran his hands down the legs of the horse left in his charge, marking acutely any splint or spavin they might have, he used to mutter, half in a resigned, half in an irritated way, "Mektub," the sole profession of his faith that he was ever heard to make, for if a thing is written down by fate, it follows naturally that there is somebody who writes, if only foolishly. Whether the mystic phrase of resignation referred to his condition or to the possible splint upon the horse's leg, no one could tell, but as the shadow passed away, as quickly as it came, he soon fell back again into the half-resigned good humour of the blind, which, like the dancer's lithographic smile, seems quite involuntary.

Years melted into one another, and time sauntered by, just as it always must have sauntered in the town where hours are weeks, weeks months, and months whole years, and

still the hum of animals and men rose from the Arab market, and still the shadows in the evening creeping on the sand seemed something tangible to the blind watcher on his stone. Not that he cared for time, or even marked its flight, or would have cared to mark it, had it been pointed out to him, for life was pleasant, the springs of charity unfailing, wit ever present in his brain, and someone always had a horse to hold, to which he talked, as it stood blinking in the sun. His blindness did not seem to trouble him, and if he thought of it at all, he looked on it as part and parcel of the scheme of nature, against which it is impious to contend. Doctors had peered into his eyes with lenses, quarrelled with one another on their diagnoses of his case, and still the Rubio sat contented, questioning nothing, and enduring everything, sun, rain, wind, flies, and dust, as patiently as if he were a rock. Nothing was further from his thoughts than that he ever once again could see. Plainly, it had been written in the books of fate he should be blind, and so when European doctors talked to him of operations and the like, he smiled, not wishing to offend, and never doubting of their learning, for had not one of them cured a

relation of his own of intermittent fever by the use of some white magic powder, when native doctors, after having burned him with a red-hot iron, and made him take texts of the Koran steeped in water, had ignominiously failed?

All that they said did not appeal to him, for all of them were serious men, who talked the matter over gravely, and looked on him as something curious on which to exercise their skill. All might have gone on in the same old way, and to this day the Rubio still sat upon his stone without a wish to see the horses that he held, the sunlight falling white upon the towers, or the red glare upon the Spanish coast at eventide, had not a German scientist appeared on the horizon of his life.

From the first day on which the Rubio held the doctor's horse a fellowship sprang up between them, not easy to explain. No single word of Arabic the doctor spoke, and all the German that the Rubio knew was either objurgatory or obscene, and yet the men were friends. Tall and uncouth and with a beard that looked as if it never had been combed, his trousers short and frayed and with an inch or two of dirty sock showing between them

and his shoes, dressed in a yellowish alpaca jacket, and a white solar topee lined with green, the doctor peered out on the world through neutral-tinted glasses, for his own eyes were weak.

Whether this weakness drew him to the blind, or if he liked to hear the Rubio's tales about the Europeans he had known, to all of whom he gave the worst of characters, calling them drunkards and hinting at dark vices which he averred they practised to a man—not that he for a moment believed a single word he uttered, but thought apparently his statements gave a piquancy to conversation—the doctor never said. Soon Tangier knew him for a character, and as he stumbled on his horse about the town, curing the Arabs of ophthalmia and gathering facts for the enormous book he said he meant to write upon North Africa, his reputation grew. The natives christened him "Father of Blindness," which name appeared to him a compliment, and he would use it, speaking of himself, complacently, just as a Scotsman likes to be spoken of under the style and title of the land he owns, although it be all bog. Though in the little world of men in which he lived the doctor was a fool,

in the large field of science he was competent enough, and when he proved to demonstration to the other doctors in the place that a slight operation would restore the Rubio's sight, they all fell in with it, and though for years the object of their care had held their horses and they had seen him every day, without observing him, he now became of interest, just as a moth becomes of interest when it is dead and put into a case with other specimens.

Whether the sympathy that certainly exists between wise men and those whose intellect is rudimentary, and which is rarely manifested between a learned and an ordinary man, prevailed upon the Rubio to submit himself to the ministrations of the German man of science, Allah alone can tell. A season saw the mounting-block deserted, and tourists gave their horses to be held by boys, who tied them by the reins to rings high in the wall, and fell asleep, leaving the animals to fight and break their bridles, and for a time no stream of cheerful blasphemy was heard, in any European tongue, upon the mounting-stone. In a clean unaccustomed bed in a dark corner of Hope House, the missionary hospital, the Rubio lay, his head bound up in bandages,

silent, but cheerful, confident in the skill of his strange friend, but yet incredulous, after the Arab way.

During the long six weeks, what were his thoughts and expectations it is difficult to say. Perhaps they ran upon the wonders of the new world he would inherit with his sight, perhaps he rather dreaded to behold all that he knew so well and so familiarly by touch. He who, when like a lizard he had basked against his wall, had never for a moment ceased from talking, now was silent, and when the doctor visited him, to dress his eyes, and make his daily diagnosis of the case, answered to all the words of hope he heard, "It will be, as God wishes it to be," and turned uneasily between his unfamiliar sheets. At last the day arrived when doctors judged the necessary time had passed. No one in Tangier was more confident than was the "Father of Blindness," who went and came about the town buoyed high with expectation, for he was really a kind-hearted man, learned but simple, after the fashion of his kind.

At early morning all was ready, and in the presence of the assembled doctors of the place with infinite precaution the dressings were

removed. Cautiously and by degrees, a little light was let into the room. Holding his patient's hand and visibly moved, the German asked him if he saw. "Not yet," the Rubio answered, and then, throwing the window open wide, the sunlight filled the room, falling upon the figure in the bed, and on the group of doctors standing by expectantly. It filled the room, and through the window showed the mountains standing out blue above Tarifa, and the strait, calm as a sheet of glass, except where the two "Calas" cut it into foam. It fell upon the cliffs which jut into the sea below Hope House; upon the hills of Anjera, and on the bird-like sails of the feluccas in the bay, filling the world with gladness that a new day was born. Still on his bed the Rubio lay, pale with his long confinement, and with his hands nervously feeling at his eyes. All saw that the experiment had failed, and with a groan the German man of science buried his head between his hands and sobbed aloud, the tears dimming his spectacles and running down upon his beard. With a grave smile the patient got out of his bed, and having felt his way to where he heard the sobs, laid his rough, freckled

hand upon the shoulder of his friend, and said as unconcernedly, as if he had not suffered in the least, "Weep not; it was not written"; then, looking round, asked for a boy to lead him back again to his accustomed seat upon his stone.

LOCHAN FALLOCH

Brown billowing woods spring from the rising ground beyond the lake. The lake itself is set in fir woods on three sides, and on the other bounded by a wild moor.

Almost all round it stretches a pebbly beach, broken by beds of bulrushes, which now and then rise from a mossy patch between the stones. Islands with ruins of the past stud its smooth surface, and are reflected upside down, as in a looking-glass reversed. The woods, chiefly of beech, appear like outworks thrown before the hills to guard their mysteries. Rough, roaring burns here and there cut a passage to the lake and brawl between banks fringed with rowan trees and ash. After the woods are passed, a further outwork of wet boggy ground, in which grow willows and sweet-gale, extends.

This by degrees melts into a dull waste of ling, strewed with great boulders of rough pudding-stone. The heath grows sparser higher up, where the wind sweeps upon it

all the year. Then it gives place to tracts of stones. Lastly, the hill rising up steep from the last slope is reached, and following a burn, until it issues from a green mossy "well," you stand upon the ridge.

There, a panorama stretches out, studded with lakes, with woods, and interspersed with farms towards the west. Towards the east lies the brown Flanders Moss, an ancient sea, which even yet appears to roll in the white mist of evening. The whole is framed in ranges of long undulating hills, which guard the south.

Northwards, the Grampians, still mysterious and wild, tower up, in peaks, in castles, and in serrated ridges, through which the passes, now disused, formerly penetrated.

Standing upon the topmost ridge, and quite invisible from any other point, quite unsuspected, lost, almost forgotten by the outer world, is hid a little lake.

It is indeed a little hidden loch, lying so deep and unsuspected in its hollow between hills, that the first Kelt or Pict who came upon it, ages ago, must straight have hit upon the name it bears. Nature seems, now and then, to have suspected that a time would come when all her secrets would lie bare and open

to the prying eye of vulgar curiosity, and to have hid away some of her chiefest beauties in places where they are in sanctuary, hallowed from human gaze, which at the same time worships and violates them. So, she set this her little gem, remote, hiding it as a hind conceals her young, deep in the heather, underneath the tallest bracken, and in a wilderness of hills. They tower on every side, bare, bald, and wind-swept, whilst in a corrie nestles the little lake, upon whose surface the wind scarcely or never preys, leaving it calm, mysterious, and unruffled, as if it held some secret, too natural for us to understand. If fairies still exist, they come, no doubt, from the Sith Bruach which guards the Avon Dhu at Aberfoyle, and sail their boats of acorn-cups and leaves on the black lakelet. Upon the little beach they run their craft ashore and dance on the broad ribbon of smooth sand which rings the lake, as a black mezzotint is edged around with white. But if the fairies come, they come unseen, leaving no token of their passage but a few turned-up leaves which they have used for boats, and the mysterious circlet of white foam they churn, which hangs between the fringe of bulrushes and the mimic surf in which float

flies that have ventured further than their wings can bear them, and now wash up and down, as in some distant island of the South Seas, drowned mariners may drift upon the beach. Sunk in its hollow far from the world, the tarn seems to have been left adrift, a derelict floated down to us from some older age, and with one's eyes closed one can see strange animals of monstrous size come down the steep hillsides and drink and play, throwing about the water as they stand knee-deep. Around its banks grows equisetum, as if to point back to a time when different vegetation, gigantic and distorted, towered by its edge, and in which harboured the strange beasts that must have been familiar to its shores.

Light-footed tribesmen, as they drove the "creagh" from the fat Lowlands to their hungry hills, must have stopped by the lake to slake their thirst, prone on their breasts their rough red beards floating like seaweed on the water as they drank. Even in summer, when bees hum in the heather, and the scent of peat fresh cast and left to dry perfumes the air, and little moss-trout bask in the tiny stream that issues from the lake, or dart amongst its stones, there broods an air as of

aloofness from mankind. Over the corrie which the water fills, leaving but little ground between it and the hills except at one end, where a long-forgotten, perhaps Fingalian, mountain trail is still half visible on the stones which lie amongst the ling, the wind sweeps softly, and the water-spiders, with greater faith than Peter's, walk on the surface of the lake so lightly that they hardly leave a shadow as they pass.

In winter, when the wind laments aloud for the lost sun, and the dark water of the lochan turns to black ice, whilst the white foam congealed clings round the stalks of the dead bulrushes, and all the heather droops in the keen frost, the scene is wild and threatening, as if the spirits of the past kept watch over the last of their possessions that had remained untouched. Then, in spite of the keen cold, the birds and animals all venture out, certain that they are safe, at least from man, and leave strange tracks amongst the snow, which form a chart of them and of their habits, readable but to those whose eyes have not been rendered dim by poring upon print.

Even in snow and cold, and when the wind drives all the grass and heather crouching to

the ground, and when the little fish rise to the air-holes in the translucent ice to breathe, and nature seems to wither in the frost, there yet remains over the lochan dhu an air as of content, amidst the desolation of the hills.

Whether the breeze just curls the water, or drives a dust of particles of frozen snow along the surface of the ice; whether the cotton-grass waves silkily and the bog-asphodels spring from the peat and the green "wells" are bright with mosses, or the field-mice play hide-and-seek between the stalks of the stiff frozen grasses, the lochlet seems to smile as enigmatically as does the Sphinx, showing itself in full communion with the past. It smiles, like a fair woman who hides a guilty secret—for knowledge, especially of happiness that is not shared with others, must be guilt, and to withhold it from us, who seek it all our lives, is surely criminal, that is, if the lake's secret were not beyond our reach, removed out of our ken, by its sheer innocence. As one looks down from the ridge, watching the black tarn sleeping in the heather, you see that what it holds is not for us, and that the sighing of the wind, which to it is a language comprehended, clear and sympathetic to its soul, to us

serves but to stir the senses, and you turn away despairing, watching a heron or a gull enter at once into the fellowship, outside of which we stand.

It might be that at night, when the moon silvers all the waters, and mist enshrouds the hills, calling out from the grass and mosses their secret perfume; when roe steal from the copses browsing so timidly about the open patches of green herbage, scattered like islands through the heath; when dark grey moths flutter about the edges of the lake, that if a child dared venture up to the lone tarn, its eyes might open and behold a wondrous world of fairies, and it would understand all that the rustling of the wind amongst the heather really means. But if it did so, either it would turn rank poet and be damned amongst its fellows, or be snatched away to dwell for ever in some fairy hill, remote from man, seeing the world as in a camera obscura, with people running to and fro like ants, in a perpetual gloom. No child will venture; the spell will not be broken, and the black, little loch will remain hidden from men's hearts, lost in the mist, lost in forgetfulness, just as it was intended that it should be lost, by Nature, when she hid it in the hills.

AT THE WARD TOLL

The mist had blotted out the moss, leaving the Easter Hill, Gartur, and the three fir trees above the Shanochil, rising like islands out of a dead sea. At times the waves of mist engulfed the islands, and then slowly fell back and left them clear, as if some tide, unseen and unsuspected, had ebbed and then had flowed again, or a volcano underneath the moss had been at first half doubtful of its work and shrouded it in steam till it had taken shape. Great drops of damp hung from the feathers of the larches in the long sheltering plantations on each side of the road. Damp filled up the interstices of spiders' webs that clung between the bents, stretching like fairy rigging between the stems, as a triatic-stay stretches between a schooner's masts. It settled on the heads of grasses, enveloping them as in a veil, making each individual stem look like a little ghost of what it had been in the summer, when it was green with life. Where banks of rushes, now

turning brown, emerged out of the shroud of steam, they looked like frozen water weeds protruding from the ice, by a pond's side, during a winter's frost.

The perfume of the spruces and of the beds of moss and blae-berries hung in the moist atmosphere and filled the nostrils with a scent of something older than mankind, keen, subtle, vivifying, and which somehow connected man, by some unseen, uncomprehended essential oil or particle so small no microscope could make it manifest, with the whole universe.

Beyond the moss the five-fold hummocks of Ben Dhu ran out into the rolling waves of mist, as a great cape runs out into the sea. Far off, in the interior ocean of the mist Ben Ledi showed its topmost ridge, just as the Peak of Teneriffe rises among the fleecy clouds of the Trade Winds.

The approaching evening added to the gloom, and night appeared about to fall with double darkness on the wide valley of Menteith. My horse's feet fell with a muffled sound upon the road, as if it had been hollow underneath. Now and again out on the moor the crowing of a grouse was heard, and once an owl floated across the road as silently as thistledown is

wafted through the air, like an enormous moth. All was so quiet and mysterious, one seemed to ride enveloped in a shroud which kept one from the world. The spirit of the north was in the air, intangible, haunting and vague, that makes the dwellers in the north vague and intangible, poetic and averse to face the facts of life, with a hard rind covering the softness of their hearts. Gigantic forms rode in the billowy vapours by my side, those Valkyrie which northern poets have discerned, either projected on the mist, as I did on that night, or else projected on the *pia mater*, of their brain, round which a mist of vapour always seemed to brood.

The shapes I seemed to see—or saw, for if a man sees visions with the interior sight he sees them, for himself at least, as surely as if he saw them with the outward eye—loomed lofty, and peopled once again Menteith with riders, as it was peopled in the past. The ill-starred earls, their armour always a decade out of fashion, and now and then surmounted by a Highland bonnet set with an eagle's feather, giving them an air half of the Saxon, half of the Kelt, their horses lank and ill-groomed, their followers talking in shrill Gaelic, seemed

to defile along the road. Their blood was redder than the King's, their purses lighter than an empty bean-pod after harvest, and still they had an air of pride, but all looked "fey," as if misfortune had set its seal upon their race.

They passed and vanished into the mist they once had known so well, and it seemed to me that they all rode, just as if they knew the way as well as they had known it in their lives, towards their ruined castle in the low island of the rush-ringed lake. I did not turn and ride with them, though had I done so I feel sure, upon arriving at the ferry-keeper's hut thatched thick with heather, out of which sprouted corydalis and on whose ridge grew tufts of ragweed, there would have been a place empty and waiting in the decaying, insubstantial boat. Highlanders, driving the "creagh" towards Balquhidder, passed, their mocassin-shod feet leaving as little impress on the mist as they had left in life, upon the tussocks of bent-grass. They urged the phantom cattle with the points of their Lochaber axes ; and, last of all, wrapped in his plaid, his thick hair curling close about his hard-lined features, passed one I knew at once by his great length of arm and the red

beard, on which the damp shone in a frosty dew, just as it glistened on the coats of the West Highland kyloes that he drove before him on the road. Though for two hundred years he had slept well in the lone graveyard of the deserted church beside Loch Voil, he seemed to know the road as intimately as he had known it in his old foraying days. As he passed by he moved his target forward and his hand stole to his sword, as if he recognised one of his ancient foes. Then he was swallowed up by the same mist that had protected him so often in his life.

The gloom grew thicker, and in the clinging air fantastic noises surged, as if the spirits of the hills, so long oppressed and overcome by modern life and by man's dominance of nature, were abroad and had resumed their sway. All the old legends appeared natural, the second-sight a thing so evident, it seemed a madness to deny. The Bodach Glas would not have been surprising had he appeared, his head averted and his plaid twisted about him in the ancient fashion of the Isles. London was millions of miles off, lost in reality, and the true world was that I thought I saw on every side, in the grey pall of mist. It seemed that

I had ridden miles through the dark, steamy woods. The damp chilled to the bones, and if I put my hand upon my horse I left the imprint of my fingers in the white dew that clustered on his coat. Emerging from the woods, at least upon one side, where the rough moorland pasture stretches out towards the moss, close to the toll-house at the cross-roads, four-square to all the winds, there is an island of old ash trees amongst the firs and spruces, which stands upon a knoll close to a gate. At all times the old trees look strange against the background of dark firs. Upon that evening they appeared gigantic, menacing, and magnified to twenty times their size. As I approached them, glad to have left the gloomy woods, my horse snorted and bounded half across the road. A voice in Spanish hailed me, and a figure moved from the shadow of the trees and stood, dew-damped and shivering, in his light southern clothes.

His olive face had turned an earthy colour with the cold, and it was rendered ghastly-looking by a red sash tied like a comforter about his neck. He told me that at a village which he thought was called Bocliva, or something of the sort, he had been informed there

lived a gentleman hard by who could speak Christian, and he believed that I must be the man. He was, he said, "fasting from all but sin that day, and he esteemed his having come across me almost a miracle, for he felt saved as on a plank, when he had heard me speak."

He knew a "litel Inglis," which he would "spika so that I might hear." Then in that language he informed me that "he had lose the ship in Liz and walka Glasco"; and then, turning again to Spanish, thanked me, and in particular for some cigarettes I gave him, which he declared "were better far than bread when the heart is empty and the feet sore, and that the scent of them was sweeter than the orange flower or than the incense in a church."

He came from Vigo, so he said, and if I went there any time, I had my house in Teis, just past the blacksmith's, and he, though a poor man, was one who could appreciate. Then, after telling me that "Ildefonso Lopez was my servant, and God would pay me," he raised his battered hat and, starting off again upon the road to "walka Glasco," disappeared into the night, singing a tango in a high falsetto voice.

I rode into the open between the rough

stone dykes that bound the road beyond the toll, passed the old-fashioned cast-iron milestone on which a hand is moulded pointing the way to Aberfoyle, and, riding cautiously down the stony brae, crossed the Ward bridge and came out on the moor.

White waves of vapour came surging up against the posts that marked the road, and foamed about them, as the surf surges round a rock. Through the thick air the scent of the bog-myrtle penetrated, acrid and comforting, and on the banks of peat the willows trembled as my horse passed them, as if they floated on the moss.

All was as lonely and as northern as before, but the spell had been broken by Ildefonso Lopez in his brief apparition out of the mist and gloom of the October evening, and though I knew I rode along the road towards the Kelty bridge, and marked unconsciously the junipers that grow just by the iron gate that opens on the path towards the Carse, it seemed somehow that I was entering Vigo, by the north channel between the Ciés and the high land on which a clump of pine trees overhangs the sea.

The noble bay spread out between the hills,

which ran down sheer, right to the water's edge, leaving at intervals just ground enough for a white, little town with red-tiled roofs to lodge itself, half hidden amongst vines.

The fishing boats, brown and with sails as sharp as a shark's fins, dotted the water, and on a tongue of land the town of Bouzas seemed to rock upon the sea, as it lay basking in the sun.

Vigo itself, with its steep, winding streets, its dark-tree'd alameda, its mouldering fort, and the decaying hulk of an old ship left derelict upon the sand, appeared, just as I first had seen it thirty years ago. The castles, where the brass guns had sunk upon the ground beside their mouldering carriages, towered above the town.

Chestnut and pine woods almost met the houses, and from the beach the chattering of the fishwives, in their bright red and yellow petticoats, resounded in my ears. Beyond the town the harbour narrowed, and the white oratory of La Guia crowned the pine-clad hill that rises up from the black point of the Cabrón. Still narrowing till it seemed a lake, the harbour stretched towards the Lazaretto, where under piles of sand that clearly show on

a still day, lie the galleons Drake hunted up the bay, until they sunk themselves to save the treasure that they held. It passed by Redondela, with its high bridge, and finished at San Payo, from whence as I looked backwards I seemed to see the islands at the harbour mouth float in a sunset, red and glorious, and crossed by bars of purple and of black.

It all appeared to hang outlined and visible upon the vapour rising from the moss, just as a wood appears, projected on the clouds, in the South Pampa on a misty morning, with its roots growing in the sky. Slowly it faded, and as I jogged along, passing the Kelty bridge and turning by the watering-trough into another belt of wood, I almost wondered whether Ildefonso Lopez had been a real man, or but an emanation from the mist from which he issued out so suddenly, and which had swallowed him again almost as suddenly, upon his lonely way.

AN IDEALIST

The comrade who had lectured having sat down amidst applause, the chairman asked for questions on the speech. In the long narrow hall the audience sat like sardines in a box, so thickly packed that they had hardly room to shout. The greater part were workmen, but workmen of the London type, sallow and slight and dressed in cheap slop clothes. Some foreigners gave colour to the gathering, and showed up curiously against a sprinkling of middle-class inquirers after truth. The latter, mostly, were callow-looking, earnest young men from various provincial universities, dressed in grey flannel suits with green or yellow neckties, their fluffy hair looking as if it never had been brushed, and their long scraggy throats so thin, one wondered they contained the enormous Adam's apple which protruded over the low-cut collar of their shirts. One or two ladies, chiefly dressed in stuffs from Liberty's, sat half-constrainedly, and jotted down either

impressions of the scene or notes of the more salient portions of the lecturer's remarks. Three or four comrades, of the kind whose daily life is Socialism, that is of course talking about it, and laying off what the world will be like at its glad advent, sat in front places, and now and then during the progress of the lecture had interjected an "'Ear, 'ear" or "Let 'em 'ave it," meaning of course the Bourgeois, who certainly that evening must have trembled in his shoes, to hear his vices publicly unveiled. They had a kind of likeness to the men who in the Quartier Latin remain art-students all their lives, wearing wide peg-top trousers, flat-brimmed hats, and flapping neckties of black crêpe de Chine, and who in cafés spout continually of art, and in their way are comrades, thinking that everlasting talk is the best way to paint a picture or to revolutionise the world. In front at a deal table sat one or two reporters, dull and uninterested, to whom all creeds and faiths were equal, and any kind of lecture or of speech, so many hours of tedious work, which they, bound to work out their purgatory here on earth, lived by reporting at so much the column or the thousand words.

Over the hall there hung that odour of hot

people, and stale scent, mixed with the fumes of coarse tobacco in the clothes, which is the true particular flavour of all meetings, Tory and Socialist alike, just as in times gone by extract of orange peel and sawdust marked a circus, or as in Catholic countries incense tones down the various smells which rise from off the faithful in a church.

No one responding to the chairman's call, he just had risen up to thank "our comrade for his eloquent, well thought out and delivered lecture, which all who 'eard it must allow was miles a'ead of all the frothy utterances of members of the two parties of boss frauds between 'oom laybour 'angs, as 'e might say upon the cross, the Liberals and Tories, 'ypocrites and Pharisees . . . if ever there was 'umbugs . . ." when a man arose and said "Excuse me, Mr. Chayrman, I 'aven't got a question, but seeing you was arsting for one, I'd like to say a word."

Boys seated in the gallery, to whom according to their philosophic state of boydom all meetings and all speeches simply were chances for diversion, shouted out "'Ear, 'ear, I saay let Betterton 'ave 'arf a mo.'"

The chairman half-constrainedly resumed

his seat, baulked like a fiery horse at yeomanry manœuvres, in full career, and toying with the water-bottle, on which great drops of moisture hung condensed, called upon Comrade Betterton, with a request he would be brief. A little withered-looking man of about seventy stood up, yellow in colour as old parchment, and with some still remaining wisps of yellowish, grey hair hanging about his head, like seaweed on a rock. His clothes were rusty black, and neatly brushed, his faded eyes of porcelain blue, were set in rims of red, his knees were shaky, and his whole being was pervaded by an air of great benevolence. Clearing his throat and looking round the hall with the assurance of a practised speaker, he broke into a breathless sentence, fluent, unpunctuated, and evidently well known to the admiring boys, who cheered him to the fray.

"I've 'eard the speech," he said, "of the comrade who has addressed us at some length, I've heard and think it 'umbug. As Shakespeare says, whilst the grass grows, the 'orse is starving." At this quotation a boy yelled "Why the 'ell don't he eat it then?" The ladies coloured, fearing the social revolution had actually begun, and from the chairman came

the hope that the audience would keep to parliamentary language "seein' that there was lydies in the 'all." Then having called upon our comrade to resume and not to take up too much time, and order being once again established, Betterton took up his interrupted speech, just as a phonograph, cut off, begins again exactly at the place where it was stopped. "What do I find? Nothing but all the means of livelihood monopolize, means of production in the 'ands of one set, land in the other, even the raw material all taken up by the capitalists. Things I say, comrades, is gettin' daily worse, nothin' being left on which a man can exercise his lybour, without a tax to pay to somebody for doin' it. What is a man to do? Sometimes I think, all I can do is to go out and throw a bomb of dynamite involvin' in the sayme destruction all the blood-suckin' sweaters and land monopolists alike . . ." What more the speaker might have said, Providence only and the boys seated in the gallery knew, for a voice emanating from the body of the hall was heard to say in a sarcastic tone, "Why don't you go and throw it?" and in the shouts of laughter that ensued, the speaker discomfited, but still benevo-

lent for all his fiery words, subsided in his seat, and with the usual compliments and the collection, without which no meeting, Socialist, Anarchist, Liberal, religious or Conservative, can ever end, the hall was emptied in a trice, the audience passing swiftly, with their eyes fixed on vacancy, before the comrades who at the door sat selling "literatoor."

This was the first occasion that Betterton revealed himself to my unworthy eyes. As time went on I knew him better, and became so to speak one of his intimates, for there are many kinds of intimates, besides the sort you eat and drink with and stand with in the club windows, to criticise the ladies' ankles as they pass. In the first place, he lived on bread and milk, thinking it wrong to take the life of anything (except of course a Bourgeois), so that the pleasures of the table were not exactly in his way.

The work of his profession, that of bill-sticker, took him far from my haunts, and caused him now and then some qualms of conscience, as when he had to cover hoardings, with the announcements of some stuff or other which he knew was made by sweated work. An atheist by choice and by convic-

tion, he yet had texts of Scripture always in his mouth, and used to say, "Only I know you see the laybourer is worthy of his 'ire, or now and then I should just chuck it, it 'urts me to be covering up an 'oarding with a great picture of some 'arlot, for the advertisement of some bloodsucker's soap. An' badly drawn too, bad art" (for he was great on art) "and sweated stuff, not that I've anything to say against a 'arlot in herself, the most of them is driven to it by the rich."

As to why this should be, or how, he did not condescend to explanation, but still believed it firmly, holding as the chief axiom of his faith the wickedness of peers, who he apparently considered had as much power, for evil, as the French aristocracy before the Revolution, or as Beelzebub. But notwithstanding poverty and the whole hive of bees he carried in his bonnet, his life was happy and his faith so great it might have moved the House of Commons from its foundations in the mud, could he have found a lever ready to his hand. As it was, at his lodgings in a slum in Drury Lane, he used to issue broadsheets, printed and set up by himself, on yellow packing paper. The one on which he prided

himself most was headed "Messalina," under which style and title he typified the Queen.

"Pause, brutal and licentious old queen," it opened, "and think, if you have time to think, in the wild orgies of your bestial career." It finished with an adjuration to the proletariat to unite, and the last line was "Blood, Blood, Blood, Heads off, Freedom and Liberty for all."

No larger than a sheet of notepaper, the little periodical was stuffed, so he averred, as full of facts as an egg is with meat, and naturally was never paid for, but placed by him upon his daily round in letter-boxes of houses of the rich. One of his pleasures (and they were few and innocent enough) was to depict the feelings of the lord into whose letter-box he had deposited his squib. "When he sits after dinner, drinking his port wine, with his boots off before the fire, it will go through him like a small-tooth comb, and maybe mayke 'im tremble, perhaps touch up his 'eart—who knows?—sometimes those kind of chaps is not all bad, only they eats and drinks too much, and 'as no time to think."

Not a dull day could Comrade Betterton remember in his whole life.

"Talk of the Greeks and Romans," he used

to say, "of course the Romans mostly was bourgwaw, like ourselves, but the Greeks certainly 'ad opportunities. I mean in art and such-like, and seeing people go about without their clothes, thus gettin' rid of all 'ypocrisy and that, but then as to an ideal for hewmanity, they was deficient. All art was for a class. Now we live in a glorious time, I wouldn't 'a missed it for a lot. But, as to art, exceptin' poor old Morris, most o' your painters and litteratoors and such is middle-class in their ideas, thinks that their kind of stuff is only for the cultivated classes, . . . and see your cultivated class, always at races and shootin' pheasants, . . . care as much about the arts as dockers down in Canning Town. What I mean is, a man like me 'as 'is ideal nowadays, and can look forward to a time, when all them Bastilles is pulled down, . . . it's figuratively I use the word. You needn't larf. . . . It does a man's 'eart good to look forward to a time when all your middle-class ideals shall be swept away, and mankind let alone, to grow up beautiful, 'ealthy, artistic, and as unmoral as the Greeks. That 'ere morality has been the curse of men of my class, making 'em 'ypocrites and driving 'em to drink."

So he went on bill-sticking for his daily bread and moralising always, both in and out of season, and testifying to his faith, with all the unction of a martyr at the stake, as once, when at a public meeting, packed to the ceiling with religious folk, someone averred he spoke "as he hoped in the spirit of my master, Christ," Betterton, rising from his seat, remarked, "'E ain't my master, Sir."

Benevolent and yet ridiculous, kindly, half mad, and shrewd in all his speculations upon life, on things, on motives, and on men, most likely years ago his bills are covered over an inch thick with others, his pot of paste turned mouldy, his brushes worn down to the wood, and he himself safely enfeoffed in the possession of the inheritance to which he had been born, a pauper's funeral, and grave.

Still, when I sometimes look on his life's work in literature, the pamphlet *Messalina*, in which poor Queen Victoria is both so roundly and unjustly vilified, and think upon the pleasure that no doubt the writer had in its production in his one stuffy room in Drury Lane, it is not always easy to be sure, if one should laugh or cry.

IN CHRISTMAS WEEK

The roar of London slackened, and those pterodactyls of the streets, the motor-omnibuses, seemed to disport themselves like great Behemoth or Leviathan, reducing their creators to an inferior place, as if they lived upon the sufferance of the great whirring beasts.

The white-faced, hurrying, furtive-looking crowds, which throng the pavements for the most part of the year, had given place to multitudes of comfortable folk on shopping bent, who walked less warily than the work-driven slaves, who move about the streets seeming as if they felt that everybody's hand was armed against them, and that to halt a moment in the race exposed them to its blow. A biting frost clad hydrants in steel mail where water dropped from them, and spread white blotches on the wooden pavement at which the cab-horses, inured to petrol patches on the stones, to mud, even to blood after an accident, to paper blowing in their eyes,

and all the myriad night noises of the town, shied as at something menacing, so far away had Nature gone out of their lives, as if no vision of green fields in which they played and raced beside their mothers, so stiltily upon their giraffe-looking legs, ever returned to haunt their labour-deadened brains.

The electric light shone blue against the trunks of trees, and the sharp cold almost dispelled the scent of horse-dung which perfumes the air of London, as if to nullify all our attempts to set a bar between ourselves and other animals, and bring us face to face with their and our common necessities and origin, laughing at the refinements of material progress, and showing us that the one way by which we can escape the horrors of the world, lies through the portals of the mind.

Peace upon earth, goodwill towards all mankind, was the stock phrase in every church, as if to make the bitterness of life outside, more manifest, reducing as it did the preachers' words to a mere froth of wormwood on the air, or at the most a counsel of perfection, towards which it was not worth one's while to struggle, seeing it set so far out of our reach.

Holiday-making crowds filled Piccadilly,

which looked quite unfamiliar without its strings of crawling cabs and prostitutes plying for hire upon its stones, as eventide drew near. One felt a sort of truce of God was in the air, and that the Stock Exchange, the sweating den, and the gigantic manufactory, in which a thousand toiled to make vast sums for some uninteresting and quite unnecessary man, were quiet, and that perhaps even the wretched negro in the india-rubber bush might have a day of rest.

The parks, under their canopy of white, turned fields again, and as the dusk came on, the sound of church bells in the air gave a false feeling of security, though one was well aware no tiger-haunted jungle held half the perils of the vast stucco solitude, in which we pass our lives. Day followed day, cold, miserable, and cheerless, and the town left deserted, by the myriads who make it look like some vast anthill, on which the ants all strive against each other, instead of helping one another after the fashion of their semi-reasonable prototypes, set one a-thinking on the Eastern legend, framed in a warm and sunny land, and therefore quite unfit for the chill north, which was the cause of such a change in life.

The frosty stars shone out, so cold and

clear, they seemed but the reflections of some world extinct, which had preserved its light, but with the heat evaporated. The moon was more congenial to our northern blood, pale, passionless, and with an air of infinite yearning after something unexpressed, whilst the full yellow beam of light from Jupiter, recalled one to the plains, where in far Nabothéa the three kings sat gazing on the stars—a kingly occupation, and one which nowadays all their descendants have allowed to fall into disuse. Perhaps unwisely, for if they followed it, who knows if some particular, bright star might yet arise on their horizon to guide them upwards out of the realms of self?

It may be too that all of us are kings born blind, and that the guiding star is shining brightly in the sky, whilst we sit sightless, with our dim orbits fixed upon the mud. Or it may chance that motor-cars, arriving at the stable where the lowly Saviour babe was laid, would have affrighted all the humble company assembled to adore. The gulf that yawns between the millionaire and the poor man is wider far than that between the watchers by the ass and oxen's stall, and the three sheikhs, who lighted down from off their horses to reverence the babe.

Nor was the gulf between the sheikhs, and the animals stabled so snugly, with their warm breath making an aureole about the sleeping baby's head, so deep as that which yawns between the modern dweller in our stucco Babylon, and his selected breeds of animals rendered so bestial by improvement as scarce to move the pity of their owners for all their various pains.

In that old cosmos, with its simple, reasonable life, so like the life of plants and trees, as fixed and as immutable as are the seasons or the tides, there was a sympathy, unthought of, but all the same at hand, which though it did not spend itself in theories, redeemed mankind from many of its sins. Justice, one hears, is but of modern growth; but in its action on the lives of men it toils a thousand leagues behind the old brutality which, though it certainly denied all rights, admitted kinship, or at least was conscious of a link between all sentient things, just as some deity who had created man in his own image might feel ashamed when called upon to punish and destroy beings so like himself, though for all that he could not hold his hand.

So in the Christmas week, with its fierce

cold and misery to thousands mocked by false protestations of the brotherhood of man, and pinched with hunger in the midst of wealth, it must have seemed that all the legend was but another of the corpse-candles lighted to set them running after its thin flame.

Then came a thaw, and all the iron-bound streets became Sloughs of Despond, in which a million horses, turned to machines, chained in their stables, and taken out, but to pound ceaselessly upon the cruel stones till it was time to be led back again and chained up for the night, toiled wretchedly, not comprehending that they were agents in the progress of the world. Still all the time the church bells pealed, and all the time the planets shone out soft and mellow, making one think involuntarily upon some old bright world which perhaps never has existed save in dreams, but which we now and then have to imagine for ourselves or else go mad at seeing ugliness revered as beauty, and wealth adored as wisdom, with all the meanest qualities of man enthroned as virtues, like a tin sky-sign setting forth some trash with its full-bodied lies. Frost, silence, traffic, all was the same to the vast vulgar town, the hugest monument of

Philistinism that the world has seen, or ever will behold.

The blackened muddy snow, reminding one of something pure, defiled, then scorned and cast upon the mire, lay piled in heaps in the chief squares, left there by accident or by design, as if to give the magnates in their shapeless palaces the mumps, and render them as hideous as the great cubes of masonry in which they lived. Misery seemed to reign triumphant in the wilderness of bricks, where dullness strove with smug hypocrisy to make life unendurable, whilst slowly the great city seemed to take up its usual course as the drear week drew out. Ladies in motor-cars, with the hard, uninviting air that wealth imparts so often even to youth and beauty, flitted about, scattering the mud on those whose toil paid for each article of dress they wore, as if they had conferred a favour on the world by deigning to exist. The chill and penetrating damp which rises from the London clay after a thaw, and makes its way into the bones and soul, to them was but another stimulus to life, and aid to appetite. Neither the look of wretchedness of men or animals seemed to say anything to them, although no doubt their

minds were all alive with charitable schemes; for never in the history of the human race has charity, that most unhumanising virtue which has ever made mankind think itself better than its fellows, walked in our midst so blatantly, or justice hid itself more timidly, than at the present day.

Boys, cold and pinched, with voices rendered harsh by all the gin their parents had imbibed, ran shouting out the names of newspapers, flourishing broadsheets on which the headings told of murders, adulteries, cheating and robbery; and smug-faced citizens and prurient-minded girls, their pink-and-white complexions strangely at variance with the twinkle in their eyes, eagerly stopped and bought them, jostling the men as if by accident, pleased at the contact with them as they passed, and yet taking offence at once if but a word was said, saving their conscience in the national way, which finds all things permissible if but due silence is preserved.

So dull and strenuous was the life that it appeared impossible in other lands the sun was shining, and that the brown-faced men and merry black-haired women had time to love and be beloved.

That nothing might be wanting to set forth all aspects of our pomp and state, in a small, narrow street well strewn with offal from the stalls of costermongers' barrows, under the flaming light of naphtha lamps, a line of men stood waiting at the door of a soup-kitchen at which some charitable soul or council had provided refreshment for the body—that body which, we know, matters so little in a transitory life.

The mud had eaten holes into their clothes, and their pinched faces under the electric light, drink-swollen and blotched, looked corpse-like as they stood shivering in the snow, which, falling down like feathers on their hats, gave them a look as if they had been supers at the pantomime of life, and at some signal from the wing, would break into a dance.

The stream of passers-by watched them unmoved, thinking no doubt that idleness or drink had brought them to their present situation; and as they waited for their turn some coughed and others scratched themselves, or muttering it was "'ellish cold" shuffled and stamped, as the snow melted on their hair and filtered through their rags.

On every side the current of the world flowed past them, leaving them stranded on

the mud, with the safe shores of progress and of wealth slipping away from them, as a spent swimmer, struggling for his life, watches the banks of a swift-running stream, race past before his eyes.

Sometimes the line of men swayed like a wounded snake upon the road as one of them passed through the door, and as the others waited for their turn one muttered to a chum, "Blime me, cheer up! it'll be better under Socialism," and spat upon the stones.

PAJA Y CIELO

Now, the whole Pampa from the Romero Grande to Nahuel-Huapi and far Patagones is cut into innumerable chess-boards of wire fencing, and railways puff across it, taking up wool and corn and hides, and other merchandise, to send to Europe, that Europe from which once came all the few luxuries the dwellers on the Pampa ever knew.

But it was not so always, and where now wave interminable crops of corn, once waved the long brown virgin grasses, which made the Pampa a sort of ocean, to the eye.

Nothing but grass and sky and sky and grass, and then more grass and still more sky. Nothing, for Pampa means "the space" in Quichua. A vast and empty space, empty, that is, of man and all his works; but full of sun and light, and of the sweetest air imaginable, so sweet that merely to think of it keeps the lungs fresh amongst the reek of towns, and makes the soul rejoice, even when petrol-

belching motor-cars fly past carrying their goggled freights.

It was the home of deer and ostriches, and of wild horses, dappled and pied, slate-coloured, roan, blood-bay, sorrel and dun, spotted like pudding-stone, calico, paint, buckskin, clay-bank, cream, and some the colour that the Arabs call Stones of the River, they all were there, tossing their manes and whinnying for joy, leading their lives in that great grassy space, where there was nothing to be seen but grass and sky.

Nothing but deer and ostriches were there, with swiftly whirling teru-teros, the mining tuco-tucos, and the mysterious matáco, the quiriquincho, the Patagonian hare, chajás with their great horny wings, flocks of flamingos, and marching columns of the black-headed Patagonian swans, with the wind ever rustling in the grass, sounding the dirge of the fair Eden so soon to be defiled. Wind waved the surges of the grass, lifting the loose hair on the necks of animals, and on the sandhills bending the plants, and making them draw patterns on the sand, just as in colder countries they trace figures in the snow.

Something there was about the Pampa,

almost unearthly, so natural it was that in a world where all is artificial, and man appears a giant, controlling everything, it seemed impossible he should be relegated back to his position as but one of the many animals, with but a little more intelligence than theirs.

A grassy sea, in which the landmarks were the stars, so that a man rode straighter in the night than in full noontide, if he had lost his way. A green illimitable sea, in which the horse was ship; a desert without camels, but as terrible to wander in as is the Sáhara, in which the horseman who had lost his trail was swallowed up and never heard of, except some traveller chanced to find his skull, just sticking out of a dark tuft of grass, which had grown rank and vigorous, as his decaying flesh laid bare the bones.

This Pampa, that now seems to be a dream, so far away it is, and so defiled by pestilential and beneficent progress, was above all an insects' paradise.

All day the hum of unseen wingéd things hung in the air, just as if millions of Eolian harps had been set everywhere—perhaps they were—and the long filaments that used to stretch from grass to grass, in a north wind,

may have been good conductors of their song. All kinds of flies buzzed, hummed, and whirred, and made themselves a nuisance or a pleasure, just as you looked at them. Grasshoppers sprang into the air, just as a salmon springs up in a weir, and settled down again into the grass, in the same way the fish slips back into the water after leaping — even the splash was paralleled by the stirring of the grass the insect made and the sharp breaking noise his wings caused in the stems. Crickets sang ceaselessly, seeming to be just at your horse's feet, but if you stopped and looked for them chirruped again behind you, making a sort of will-o'-the-wisp of sound. Locusts in myriads used to pass, high up, in search of cultivated land making a noise as of an army in the air, darkening the sky, and followed by a multitude of birds, hanging upon their ranks.

The dwellers on the plains put all the tribe together under the name of "bichos," and only thought of them as dangerous to crops, or disagreeable to the skin, although no doubt they would have missed them vaguely had they disappeared, just as a man bred in the country, though born without imagination, still misses something in a town, that he can not describe.

Birds, from the ostrich, which the old Quichuas called the "Desert's Mirth," down to the little black and white "viudita," swarmed in their millions. Vultures and crows hung almost out of sight like specks, and yet, when a tired animal was left to die, appeared as if by magic and waited, just as an heir waits with resigned impatience for a rich uncle's death. Along the streams the pink flamingos fished, or rising in the sun looked like a flock which had strayed out of some old picture, lovely and yet unnatural to eyes accustomed to see birds, all grey or brown, flying through air as thick as blotting-paper.

All these were of the nature of exterior graces, but the interior vision of the Pampas as revealed to one who writes of it, as of some personal friend, lost, but still recollected vividly, always lamented, and to be called again to memory by an effort of the will, was something that enflamed the heart with joy. Mountains and woods, snows, sands, and the illimitable vision of the sea, all have their moments when they seem to smile. Green woods in spring, mountains at sunrise, the deceitful sea when on the beach of some fair island it ripples in, as innocently as if it never drowned a mariner, or

beat a ship to matchwood in its destroying surge; even the desert sands, for the brief season when the camel-thorn turns green, or when the setting sun flushes the sand-hills, all seem to smile. The keynote of them all is sadness, sadness and melancholy, which spreads a sense of cloud over the heart—tightening its strings and turning back the soul upon itself.

In the wide ocean of the Pampa, where the waves seemed to roll without advancing or receding, tideless but for the ebb and flow of winter and of summer, all was joy. Even a storm obscured its smile but for a moment, and the wise saying that joy cometh in the morning—almost incomprehensible in other countries where each day brings care—might have been written by a Gaucho prophet, or a philosophising Manzanero chief, or skin-clad Patagonian seer, with the strange emblems that they used to paint upon their guillapices of guanáco skin. Perhaps the being near to nature made all lightsome, for looking down below the surface, all was as horrible as it is elsewhere, man preying on the animals, they on each other, Indian on Gaucho, and in the then small, isolated towns the conquering

European was just setting out on his career to enslave them all and make them miserable.

That it was near to nature was seen at once, both by man's attitude to man, and to the animals. So ruthless was he in his dealings with them that he was scarcely cruel, that is unless a tiger be so when he strikes down an ox. Life was so joyous that it was taken without thought and rendered up without a tear; and when the taker, having wiped his knife upon a tuft of grass, sat down to smoke a cigarette, certain it is no qualm of conscience troubled him, more than it does a wolf. The little air that comes at sunset ruffled his hair as he pushed back his hat, and stirred the poncho of his victim lying huddled on the ground, and it may be he muttered, if indeed he thought at all about the matter, "pobrecito," as if he felt he had accomplished both their destinies, almost against his will.

In the thick montés fringing the river banks an air as of a temple in which to worship nature stole on you as you entered them on horseback, following strayed animals, whilst birds in their degree seemed to sing greetings as they sat about, too unaccustomed to man's presence even to move away. The ceaseless

wind which either howled or rustled on the plains was broken, and animals were fatter and less wild than those outside the woods. They moved amongst the trees, just as they must have done in the dim Nabothéan Entre Rios where they all took their birth. The parrots chattered joyously, the monkeys howled, myriads of frogs raised their metallic note, and sitting sideways on your horse, rolling a black Brazilian cigarette, you saw at once that it was love of nature, not want of faith, that made the Israelites propose to rear two tabernacles for their own wandering chiefs.

Deeper within the monté flowed some stream, set thick with camaloté, as thick as is a piece of cloisonné enamel, with the same coloured flowers. Beneath them ran the water, and to cross you cut down branches, the horses treading gingerly along, their riders shouting when they gained the bank, out of the joy of life, and being answered back antiphonally by the sage cormorants seated upon the trees.

Over the plain and monté the same air of natural joy hung equally, making the darkest woods seem bright, and the wide Pampa brighter still, to the interior vision of the man attuned to them and their primæval air. Rail-

ways may cut the one into vast chess-boards, on which the pawns are human lives, and in the darksome glades of the thick woods of espinillo and of ñandubay, sawing-machines, fed by pale, sweating men, may whirr and clatter, giving a foretaste of a hell compounded of the simples we ourselves have deified; but the bright recollections of the days of ostriches and deer will still remain and become legendary. Perhaps at daylight, or better, just at the false dawn, when the white mist enshrouds the pajonáles making the ghostly heads of paja brava loom gigantic, all may be blotted out and purified, and the vast sea of grass and sky take for a moment its old aspect of a great inland ocean on which the ostriches appear just as a nautilus looks, blown by the north-east Trades.

That is the way in which I see it. . . . Adios Pampa . . . or perhaps, until so long.

"LOS PEARES, UN MINUTO!"

The line ran close beside the Minho, which foamed and brawled in the deep channel it had cut between the hills. Along the banks thickets of oleanders grew, mixed here and there with tamarisks. Clouds of white mist, raised by the sun after a touch of frost, hung over everything, shrouding the chestnut forests, half-way up the trees, leaving their tops, as it were, detached and floating in the air.

It lingered in the stacks of maize, making them look like bee-hives. About the curious little hutches of rough stone, in which the peasants in Galicia store their Indian corn, it clung, leaving their squat stone crosses, suspended in the air without a base, as if, by a perpetual miracle, they were sustained, through some mysterious power. Then, the sun rose in all its glory, and as the train slowly crawled past, jangling and creaking like a bullock-cart, all the old agricultural life, such as that which Theocritus or Columella have described, was

plain in all the beauty of its old-world simpleness and charm. Impassive men stood herding sheep, leaning upon their sticks.

Girls held sleek, coffee-coloured cows by a long rope to graze, and twirled their distaffs, as they watched them eat. Women washed clothes, at great stone tanks fed by a rill that issued from the rocks, conducted in a cane, and overarched with vines.

As they knelt in a row, dressed in bright red and yellow petticoats, with scarlet handkerchiefs upon their heads, their wooden shoes appearing like canoes behind their tucked-up skirts, they sang, a natural, harsh, wild song that penetrated to the marrow of the bones. Sometimes from other working places or from fields, other high voices answered them, and so a dialogue went on, just as it passes between birds unseen in a deep wood, all in a minor key. Primitive bullock-waggons, with solid wheels, and sides of wicker-work, like those on Roman coins, slowly crawled on the roads. The gentle oxen, swaying to and fro, just as a man walks, wrapped in a Spanish cloak, appeared to fabulate as they turned towards each other, when the driver touched them with his goad, or called them by their names, exhorting them to be

themselves and pull. The wheels creaked with a jarring sound, and seemed to sing as if a swarm of bees had been imprisoned in the axle, making a noise which, as the peasants say, both stimulates the beasts and frightens wolves, and is agreeable to those who do not care for pro gress and modernity, or the sharp whiz of steam.

Under the brown-tiled eaves long rows of maize-cobs ripened in the sun, and on the bushes here and there red and blue rags, and petticoats were hung to dry, and stood out blotchily, like colours on a painter's palette, against the grass, and the metallic-looking scrub of arbutus.

In the minute and old-world gardens grew patches of cabbages, upon high stalks, like that which the old-fashioned Scotch knew as "long kale," and by the steps which led up to the houses plants of red salvia, and underneath the pollard oak trees, the autumn crocus spotted the grass like stars. Up many of the hills terraces of vines, all turning red and purple, mounted in tiers, and through the gorges now and then a distant bagpipe wailed like a soul in pain.

As the train wriggled like a snake through

tunnels, the engine taking the short curves just as a bicyclist wheels in and out of heavy traffic in a street, creeping along the edge of precipices, and then emerging once again through woods into the cultivated fields, it passed a village, and drew up at a little station, near the river's bank. A crowd blocked all the place, and on the house-tops men stood watching for the train; boys seated in the trees looked down upon the scene; and as the porter, in a nasal voice, called "Los Peares, un Minuto," it was at once apparent that the cry was quite illusory, for piles of boxes, bags, and bedding crowded the platform, whilst the perspiring stationmaster struggled in vain to make a passage to the line. The crowd surged to and fro, and to the questions of the passengers, women in tears, and boys excited by the crush and noise, replied that the whole hamlet known as Val de Cabras was going to Buenos Ayres, taking their priest with them, to found another Val de Cabras, out on the southern plains. As always happens in a country such as Spain, where time is of no value, the people rushed about as if the Day of Judgment were at hand. The stationmaster, who, if no one had been in the train, would have allowed it minutes beyond its time,

was sweating blood and water to get everyone on board. Old women hugged their sons, and men stood stifling down their tears, their patched and parti-coloured clothes looking in keeping with the scene. Girls raised an almost Arab wail, and in the midst of the confusion stood the priest, a stalwart, red-cheeked countryman, surrounded by a group of people, who held him, some by his hands, some by the lappels of his coat, and all pressed round him as a swarming hive presses about its queen, conscious he was the centre of their little world, wrenched up from its foundations, and so soon to be absorbed in the mysterious continent beyond the seas, which either swallows up their fellows, just as a fish sucks down a fly, or else returns them, rich and unrecognisable, at the end of years. The people struggled round the priest, those who had elected to remain behind, kissing his clothes, the men grasping his hands in theirs—hard, horny, and deformed by toil—and asking to be blessed. Now and again he turned towards the gate, behind which stood a row of donkeys and of mules, tied up to posts, with coloured blankets on their saddles, and their heads nodding in the sun. Women, with coloured flannel petti-

coats, red, green, and yellow, like a bed of tulips, clattered across the platform in their wooden clogs, and boys raised the shrill cry they use in Portugal and in Galicia when excited, which sounds like a horse neighing, and from the crowd of hot, perspiring men and women there came a smell as of wild animals, mixed with the scent of bundles of salt fish, which almost all of them bore in their hands. Some dragged great parcels wrapped in striped blankets tied with innumerable knots, and others carried on their shoulders the little ark-shaped trunks, covered with cowskin with the hair on, that look as if they had been made upon the pattern of a mediæval coffin, which, on a platform, seem as if they mourned the bullock-waggon where they had passed their lives.

Hard, knotted hands reached out and grasped, for the last time, others as hard and toil-stained, which were thrust towards them through the palings, and men clasped one another with their heads looking over each other's shoulders, just as the patriarchs of Scripture embraced and wept upon each others' breasts, and quite as naturally. A universal sob shook the whole crowd, which billowed to and fro, like water agitated in a tank, resisting all the efforts of the station-

master to get the train away at its appointed time.

At last, when all the bundles and the trunks, the water-bottles, and the poor household treasures, which the departing villagers, driven from their idyllic old-world life by weighing-down taxation, were taking with them, to wring and salve their hearts in the New World, were put on board, the priest was left alone, holding a bulky umbrella in his hand. The porter clanged upon the bell, the futile horn, which hangs upon a nail in Spanish stations, tooted feebly, and deep down below, the Minho dashing through the rocks, roared a farewell to those who, in the future, would, from the rivers they would know, hear nothing but an oily gurgle, and the occasional hollow sound of the alluvial soil as it fell down into the deep and muddy stream, that undermined the banks.

The emigrants all climbed into the train, and from the crowd assembled rose a cry, "The blessing, father; bless us once more before you go"; but he, standing with one foot on the step, still looked towards the palings, when through the crowd a breathless boy came elbowing his way, and dragging by a string a white and liver-coloured pointer, which, when it saw

the priest, rushed forward, and fawned upon his knees.

Handing his umbrella to a woman in the train, he drew his left hand hurriedly across his face, leaving a snuffy mark, where it had met the tear, and then, patting the dog upon his head, murmured, "Adios, Navarro," and with an effort and a gulp, steadily gave his blessing, as the companion of his rambles whined and strained upon the rope.

Rough, friendly hands stretched out and drew the priest into the train, which, after jolting heavily, began to wind about through the deep cuttings in the rocks, emerging now and then close to the road, on which stood groups of people, waving and shouting their farewells. Just as it passed the last house of the village, running close to the road, an olive-coloured man upon a mule, stood in his stirrups, and with uplifted hand made a cross in the air, as the train, gathering way, slipped past and, entering a tunnel, was swallowed up and lost to those who, standing on the platform, stood waving handkerchiefs, and gazed with yearning eyes at the last carriages as they vanished from their sight. Then it emerged again into the sun, and a girl washing by a

stream, her donkey tied beside her, putting one arm across its neck, waved a red dripping petticoat, and the train, puffing and snorting, resolutely set its face towards that Buenos Ayres which was to make and mar its freight.

It bore them westward towards a land bare of traditions, of vegetation, of everything that hitherto had made their lives; a land in which their children would be educated men, not knowing good from evil, as their fathers in a rudimentary way had dimly comprehended them, where they would eat their fill and lose their individuality, becoming uncomprehending instruments of the greatness of a vast empire, and from whence they would regard Galicia with a mixed feeling of contempt and pity, after the fashion of self-educated men.

At every puff the wheezing engine made, it took the emigrants further away from their old, hungry, but idyllic life; further away from bee-hives, made from the section of a cork tree, and laid in rows amongst the lavender and thyme; further away from the sleek, mild-eyed oxen, and from the "romeria," where they had danced "muiñeiras" to the sound of "gaita" and of pipe.

No more the ploughman in the deserted Val de Cabras would return home at night, carrying his plough, after the fashion of the ploughmen of whom the Georgics treat, or girls at evening time gather round the steps of the stone fountains and gossip as their hooped wooden buckets automatically were filled through long tin pipes, fitted upon the iron nozzle, where the water flowed. Lovers would no more linger in the oak woods of an evening, and tell the tale that never wearies those who tell or listen to it, whether amongst the cistus-carpeted "robledos" of Galicia, or in the alleys of a town. Each jolt and jerk upon the coupling chain, and each white bellowing burst of steam, left the deserted village more deserted, more given over to the decay that soon would settle on it, when in the winter nights the snow would lodge unheeded on the roofs, and the wolves scamper through the streets.

As it went twisting on the track, winding and wheeling through the tunnels, and emerging now and then into the sunshine, the people, sitting hunched amongst their bundles, broke into a high-pitched song, which floated in the balmy, pine-scented air, and was taken up from one end to the other of the train. Cistus

and lavender, thyme, burnet, and wild marjoram, germander, and the dead leaves of oak and chestnut, gave out their aromatic scent, and floating in the sun, white butterflies were borne across the Minho, skimming the streams, and soaring steadily across the linns.

Nature had put on all her charms, to make the parting bitter, and to fix more firmly an eternal, sad recollection in their minds, of their lost homes. Nothing was left of the departing village, but the name, and a few elders, who had remained behind to hunger and neglect; and in some other village, perhaps, Navarro, left to the care of some strange priest, sorrowed and wondered, for the great Power that chastens whom He cares for, extends a hand even upon the dogs of those He blesses with His love.

TRANSFIGURED

The winter sun, after a day of glory, was sinking gradually, though there was still an hour or two of light. The glare had blotted out the walls and fences; the relics of an older, pleasanter, more human civilisation rose like islands springing from a sea of burnt dry grass. Towers, castles, aqueducts, tombs, and piles of masonry, now shapeless, but which once had been well known to the inhabitants of Rome, who no doubt hailed them with joy on their return from foreign countries, just as we hail the gasworks by the bridge at Battersea, the Lambeth shot tower, and the church in Langham Place, stood up on every side. They stood like finger-posts upon the road of history to guide us backwards to an age of cruelty and of oppression, in some respects just like our own, but differing from it by the possession of the sense of beauty, and by the lack of cant, that fourth dimension of our state. The heat had raised a haze, which had turned every-

thing to gold. The decaying piles of bricks, and the long lines of ruined aqueducts, the distant city, with the cross upon S. Peter's seeming to hang against the sky, as when it first was seen by Constantine, had lost their air of ruin and dejection, and appeared glorified, as if they waited for the triumph of some emperor, who should deliver man. The gold had tinged the snow upon the Sabine hills, turning them back again into volcanoes, with streams of molten lava running down their flanks. The towns perched on the rocky hills were glorified and shone refulgent, each looking like a little Athens, as it must have looked to Pericles, their churches each one turned to an Acropolis. The sleek cream-coloured oxen stood and chewed the cud, their limpid eyes looking like coal-tar heated and allowed to cool till it acquires a jetty and transparent glaze. They stood, conscious of their nobility, direct descendants from the time when Rome was noble and the centre of the world. The Gracchi must have loved their ancestors, tended and ploughed with them. Where shepherds dressed in brown herded their sheep, their great white dogs beside them, there rose an acrid scent, which took you back to a remote

and tiny Rome, in which the flocks were folded every night.

At times a peasant on his rough black pony, holding an ox-goad balanced across the saddle like a lance, jogged past, wrapped in a tattered cloak. In the deserted Via Appia, once thronged with busy folk coming towards that Rome to which led every road, and now an avenue which somewhere must come out upon the Styx or on the banks of Periphlegethon, no one seemed to stir. The tourists had gone home, and the clear air no more resounded to the voices of the citizens of the great republic which no doubt one day will proclaim Rome and its Agro a territory, pending the time when it may qualify to be a State. The living seemed to be effaced and to have given place, as in fact they always must, to those who had become the real owners of the soil by mingling with it after death. Those who had paved the Appian Way, and built the tombs which fringe it, and who had ruled the world as confidently as does the Anglo-Saxon race to-day, appeared to smile derisively when from the neighbouring high road the hooter of a motor-car smothered the bleating of the sheep. They ruled so confidently that they could not have

seen the figure of a man advancing slowly by a road at a right angle to the great thoroughfare which led from Rome to Brindisi in the days when Horace ambled out upon his mule. He tramped along slowly and doggedly, carrying a short, bright hedge-knife, with which he had been working, in his hand. Bent, dirty, and with the air of resignation that a hard life often imparts, he trudged along the road, just as he must have trudged through life, without complaint, and yet resentful as is an overdriven ox. The sun had burned his hair a rusty brown, his flesh a livid colour, and on his hands great freckles like the blotchings on a trout, showed he had once been fair, that is for an Italian, although his face was almost hidden in a week's growth of beard. A black tight-fitting jersey, stamped with half-moons in white, discoloured underneath the arms with sweat, and darned in places with a light-coloured thread, did duty for a shirt. It left his neck, scraggy and wrinkled as a vulture's, bare, and round it was a faded red silk handkerchief tied in a sailor's knot. A thick moustache covered his mouth, which when he spoke revealed his teeth, all stained and broken, looking like those of an old horse, yellow and long

with age. Across his shoulders, dangling like a cloak he wore his jacket, made of a brown and shoddy-looking cloth, such as you see at a ship-chandler's in a little foreign port. A broad and greasy leather belt kept up his trousers, which time and wear had made as shiny as a piece of oil-cloth, rubbing the pattern out and laying bare the woof. His black felt hat was tilted at an angle, covering a hole, gaping and ugly, where his left eye had been, which seemed to have been taken out by an unskilful surgeon, who had gashed and scarred the cheek. Patience had given to his face an air of dignity, as of a Samson, blinded and in chains, peering about sightless and puzzled in the darkness of his life, and wondering why men laughed. He stopped to pass the time of day and make a cigarette, moistening the paper with a tongue as dry as a macaw's, and after lighting it, with a match rolled up in a bit of newspaper, drifted quite naturally into the story of his life. He told it fluently, with a good choice of words, but in a perfunctory way, neither commenting or extenuating anything, and yet when he began, something within him made him keep on and finish it, not that he knew it was a scripture, written for any-

body's learning, but in the same way a volcano belches forth its flames, from its interior fires.

"Two francs a day, at forty-eight, for ten hours' work, and an hour to walk each way. Of course, the two hours should be paid for as I do not walk them for amusement, but what's the good of talking? Turn redeemer and you are crucified. Look at my hands at forty-eight, after a life of work. . . ."

He held them out. They certainly had been well crucified, and looked like roots of trees, but dirtier, gnarled, knotted, and not inviting to the eye. A finger, too, was missing from the left hand, leaving a stump, just like a candle-end.

He smiled, not the least bitterly, but as a man may smile in a picture gallery at an unpleasant martyrdom by Ribalta, Ribera, or other painters of the Valencian school, to show that he is human, and that the sight of suffering does not disgust, when it is masked by art. Spitting, in a philosophic way, not at the world, but merely on the ground, he broke again into his monologue, almost against his will, just as the prophets sometimes seemed to speak, in the Old Testament. "I ought, perhaps," he said, "to have gone to the Argentine

Republic when I was young. A man can have a horse there—stand upright on his feet, and does not need to go about, as he does here in Italy, with his hat always in his hand.

"Besides, it was the land of Garibaldi in his youth—there he learned to be free. Now what is the use of talking? I am too old, and an old dog loves the house that he knows, even if he is beaten in it. My age too, and my finger make it impossible. They would not let me sail. Instead of that, when I was young I went up the Levánt, first to Greece, which I liked well enough, for the wages on the Corinth railway were good, the wine sound, cheap, and would be better, if they had not a cursed way of filling it with pitch. What can you expect, though, from a people who cross themselves like Turks, from right to left, when all the other Christians make the sign from left to right? Not that I often make it, or ever, except perhaps at night on a dark road, or when a master looks.

"In Greece I married. She was an Italian girl, not a bad housewife, and tidy—religious also; a little of it is good for women, just as a little wine is good for men. Well, that lasted only a year or two. When I got back from

Corinth she was dead, and all my savings stolen.

"After that, Greece was black to me; I left my little boy with Sisters and off to Candia, an island of the Greeks, belonging also to the Turks, but under international control, why I don't know. There I worked for a year or two, I can't quite remember; but I do remember that I lost my finger there, working with a steam crane at Lárnaca. There was no compensation to be got, as the man I worked for was a consul, and I had no passport, so when I wanted to appeal . . . pay and appeal, eh? . . . he threatened to send me home to Italy. Repatriation was what he called it, but it is all the same, when a poor man has to do with rich men, especially if they are consuls or the like. Justice, but not in my house, as the proverb says. After that I took a passage in a pilgrim ship to Alexandria. She was packed as full of infidels as a basket is with fish. I hadn't anything to steal, so I was not robbed; not that the infidels are any worse than we are in that respect.

"Alexandria I found a place in which a man could live. Hot, but not too hot, except now and then, and wages good, upon the railway,

until I lost my job: good sterling English money too, gold without fluctuation; there I saved seven pounds, all in the little sovereigns, two of which make one.

"So now I got my little boy across from Athens, for I had no wish he should become a clerical, and found a first-rate job, to clean the city sewers, four francs a day—that is chellini, better than francs, they are.

"A dirty job? Yes, but four chellini! sheelins, eh, you call them. A cursed illness overtook me—not fever, but another kind of bad air—and all my seven pounds soon vanished. Again I got no compensation. My employer was a Jew; but Jews and Christians are alike in such things. Then I went to Beyrout, paying my passage, and worked at making railroads as before in Greece, with hundreds of Italians, for we Italians are the beasts of burden of the world. From there I tramped on to Damascus. Frightened? No, not the least; Christian and heathen poor are kind enough to one another, and when a man has nothing anyone can steal he is safe enough, almost in any country.

"Yes, they say Damascus is a pretty place, but I saw nothing of it but the electric-light

works and the hospital. 'Twas there I lost my eye, owing to the sudden fusing of a wire, that and because the doctor in the hospital made a mistake and left a little piece of iron in the wound. To save my other eye I had to have the wounded one taken out, and saw the stars, I can tell you, during and after the affair.

"Then—this was two years ago—I got repatriated as unfit to work by our consul at Beyrout, and went to work again here in our own Campagna at cutting firewood, making drains, sheep-herding—anything a man of forty-eight, with one eye, and with a finger gone, is competent to do."

He stopped, and his cigarette having gone out, he put the stump behind his ear for future use, asked me the proper time, seeing that I had come from Rome; then, having stuck the broad, curved hedge-knife in his belt, from which it hung just like a legionary's sword, he struck into a track which led up towards Albano, for the recitation of his life had lasted for three miles.

The sun was almost sinking, red and glorious, and distant Rome appeared to rise from a great ocean, just as Cadiz rises from the sea.

All was lit up and changed. The great sad plains turned to a sheet of silver, the hills to fire, the decaying relics of the past to palaces; and as the man, stopping a moment on the upland path to wave his hand, stood in the setting sun's full glare, he was transfigured, and appeared gigantic, outlined against the sky.

Then, as the gathering darkness seemed to bring the clouds close to him, he grew taller still, and as he vanished, seemed to be bearing the weight of the whole world, like Atlas, on his back.

BRUTTA PASSEGGIATA

The sky was full of larks, and over all the great brown plain, just turning here and there to green, an air of gladness hung. Nature and Spring appeared to have awakened after their winter's sleep, and to be starting out once more, like maidens on their bridal morn, to court the kisses of the sun. A smell of warmth and growth gladdened the senses, and man seemed once again to have entered into full communion with the beasts, the flowers and trees, just as he once had done in the fair garden by the Chât-el-Arab, in which God by His last creative act received that human recognition which proclaimed Him God. Along the muddy streams the canes were bursting from their winter sheaths of brown. The water spiders timidly began to venture out, each one as bold a navigator into the unknown as was Columbus, endued with faith as great as his, and each one with his own magnetic needle, planted by instinct in his microscopic brain.

Myriads of the minutest flies swarmed with a gladsome hum about the edges of the pools, in which the water now and then was ringed by the round head of some exploring tortoise, after its winter sleep. All animals and insects seemed to have come into a glad new world, inherited by right divine from their remote and prehistoric ancestry, which in primæval times had long ago appeared as well equipped for their existence as their descendants of to-day, unlike mankind, that slowly has ascended by degrees. The sun itself shone, as it seemed with youth, refreshed by winter and a season of long nights. Nature rejoiced in its renewed exuberance, knowing exactly what it had to do, taking no thought either upon to-morrow or to-day.

Drops of green life congealed, hung at the ends of twigs, that soon should be unfolded into the glory of the leaves. Occasionally a lizard darted from the crevice of a wall, looked at the light a little timidly, and disappeared again, just as a timid bather dips his toes into the waves and runs back to the shore.

Calves frisked beside their mothers, and lambs skipped up and down, arching their backs like a wild horse first saddled, whilst

lazy shepherd dogs lay basking, one eye upon the sheep and one upon the flies which buzzed close to their noses, as if the sense of danger gave a zest to play.

Even the peasants on the plain, yellow and ague-racked, and bound, almost as fast as trees, to the small district where they had been born, seemed less downtrodden, and shepherds minding sheep sang in a high falsetto voice songs which all ended in a long-drawn note struck on a minor key.

It was a day in which Pan and the nymphs, the hamadryads, and the rest of the humane and Pagan gods, whose worship still endures under another name in Italy, might have come forth like butterflies after their hibernation of a thousand years, and found all the Campagna, which they had once known covered with buildings, pulsating with life, still lovely in decay. In the brown solitude they had once known all peopled with their shrines, they might have danced, after a tear or two, to find themselves the sole survivors of their world, and sung, just as a man when he comes back after the lapse of years and finds his house deserted and in ruins, first weeps to ease the aching of the heart, then falls a-humming some old tune,

almost involuntarily, as things forgotten well again into his mind. It seemed as if Death had forgotten for a space his work, and as if envy, hatred, poverty, suffering, and pain must have been banished, or held over for a spell; as if all gold had disappeared, except in poetry or on the domes of cities far away, just seen at sunset, but unattainable as those sunk in the sea, which now and then appear for a brief season, just before a storm. A veritable truce of God seemed to have been proclaimed, including every living thing in its provisions, and sealed and witnessed by the spring, God, Nature, and the world. Soracté stood out, blue and serrated to the east, rising sharp up from off the plain just as an island rises from the sea.

The Alban Hills, Horace, had he returned to life, would have known at a glance, with the wild ridge, underneath which the Speculum Dianæ sleeps, blue and unruffled, hiding beneath its depths the golden galley which lies rotting in the mud. All these he would have known, and portions of the Via Sacra where he used to walk, more by the inequalities of ground than by the sight of anything he saw; but all the rest would have been as a dream, horrible and unreal, except the plain itself, and

the unchanging life that shepherds live, like that which he described. There seemed no reason that the apparent truce should ever have been broken judging by the eternal sense of quiet, which hung in the air, only disturbed by the metallic croaking of the frogs, the crickets' note, or the rustle of the wings of dragon-flies, which hovered round the flowers, as do the humming-birds, on the Tijuca, or round the orange trees run wild, in the deserted missions of the Paraná.

Sheep followed shepherds who walked in front of them, piping, some upon rude wooden pipes, such as their Etruscan ancestors had used, and some on penny whistles made of tin, but which they still attuned to old-world strains, proving that even progress bows its head to custom; and oxen, feeding in the long lush-grass, answered their names when called, by lifting up their heads.

Had one but gone into the Bosco Sacro with a modicum of faith, Egeria would have been there waiting, just as she sat and looked for Numa in the round clump of trees upon the shoulder of the slope above the Via Appia Nuova; but faith has paled before belief, and the nymph waits in vain.

Along the smooth-worn stones on which the legionaries tramped to civilise and to enslave the world, those round flat stones that once stretched right from Rome up to the Grampians, a ceaseless stream of traffic still poured on, as it has poured for nineteen hundred years. Brown peasants driving sheep, and rich Americans nursing their indigestion and their spleen in motor-cars; herders of buffaloes, on black and shaggy ponies, such as the Volsci rode; tourists on bicycles and ladies riding to the meet; and all those nameless nomads who in warm countries always seem on the move (true gypsies, either by blood or grace), succeeded one another, and each without the least connection with his fellow, just as motes dance about, seen in a sunbeam, on a hot summer's day.

The thick white dust hung in the air and covered everything. It blotted out the rags and changed the summer fabrics that the passing ladies wore into an indistinguishable and neutral tint; upon the coats of horses and of mules it clung congealed in sweat, and from its folds the passers-by emerged just as a steamer slips out from the fog and looms gigantic, abreast of Finisterre, or at the mouth of a slow river running like oil between the

mangrove swamps, through which it filters to the sea.

A puff of wind cleared all the road, carrying the dust like a white cloud across the plain. The day wore on, and as the freshness died away, an air of sadness, born of the sunshine, which in hot countries seems as if it emanated from a sun wearied by his daily task for myriads of years, invaded everything. The unseen larks sang shrilly in the sky, their note just filtering to the ear; the lizards basked as if they had been glued down to the stones, and on the margins of the streams the new-born canes drooped in the scorching heat. The passers-by upon the road became more rare, then ceased, except for peasants who at long intervals appeared, seated high in their carts with nautilus-shaped canvas covering, a green bough flapping in their horses' head-stalls to keep away the flies. No songs were heard, except the crickets', which as the day closed in became intensified, sounding as shrill and as perpetual as the electric bell which twitters as a train stops at a southern station, in the full noonday glare.

Slowly the heat abated, and a freshness stole into the air, as the light breeze coming up from

the sea at Ostia gently stirred the leaves. Along the edges of the road the peasant women sat and drank it in, combing their children's hair, and looking out across the plain, just as a sailor sits on the fore-bitts, and looks out on the sea, after a long spell at the wheel, under a baking sun.

When the whole road was bare of traffic, and the sadness of the night, taking the world out into the unknown, was near, a troop of oxen slowly came in sight. Gently they surged along, with the same movement that a man wrapped in a cloak assumes. Their limpid eyes belied the promise of their monstrous horns, and as they walked some of them munched a little grass, which left a greenish foam upon their lips. The noblest of their race, descended from the times when men and they had first combined to till the earth, their sleek cream-coloured flanks heaved gently, and it appeared as if they marched to victory, with the blind faith in man that centuries of service had encouraged them to hold.

Beside them frisked some calves, snow-white and innocent, and with their budding horns just showing black beneath the skin, as buds upon an elm show black before the leaves un-

fold. Behind them came the drovers on their black ponies, each with his goad across the saddlebow. Slowly they marched along, and as they passed before the crossing where the road breaks off towards the "Latin Tombs," a woman sitting by the road looked on the oxen and the young calves regretfully, and muttering "brutta passeggiata, vanno alla morte," opened the gate to let the herd pass through.

They passed along unconsciously, towards the slaughter-house, and in a quarter of an hour the sun set in a sea of blood, crimson and violet, and breaking up like an Aurora Borealis into strange shapes, which seemed to chase each other through the sky, before they vanished in the night.

DUTCH SMITH

PAINTERS all knew Dutch Smith and laughed at him, for a kind-hearted, ineffective soul, damned in the love of art.

His kindliness he had acquired from nature, his nickname from his love of the Dutch school.

Tall, gaunt, and with an air of having been an officer of volunteers, he looked out on the world through steel-grey eyes, which gazed far off, yet seemed to see nothing particular, in the horizon of their view.

Withal he had a subcutaneous humour, which now and then welled to the epidermis (just as the pitch suddenly bubbles in the lake of Trinidad), but never overflowed. Bred as a corn merchant, his attitude to art was that of the traditional hen to ducklings. He loved, but wondered at it, but still more wondered at himself for his great daring in having left so sure a calling to follow such an ignis fatuus, as art.

Thus it appeared that a continual debate went on between the objective corn merchant and the subjective painter, just as Maimonides averred the dual personality of Moses held converse with itself upon the mountain-top. Having embraced the artist's state and faith, he laboured at his self-imposed vocation with a persistency which would have made him great, that is, if greatness were attainable, merely by work alone.

With honest pride he used to tell how much his painting cost him every year: so much for brushes, canvases, and paint, but leaving out of all his calculations what he expended for his personal wear and tear, for any thought of self had never filtered to his mind. Each spring he went to Haarlem to paint a subject much painted by the school he loved, in which a red-brick church with a tall spire sheathed in corroded copper was the chief feature of the scene.

Seating himself before it on his stool, his paints and various accessories spread out before him as if he had been offering them for sale, most conscientiously he would reproduce each brick and all the pointing, even the stork's nest on the parapet, just where the spire sprung from

the tower, together with the clock, on whose cracked face one hand did duty, so that you had to make a complicated calculation to find the time of day.

From year to year he migrated to Haarlem, appearing in the spring, just as the stork which built upon the tower came back from Africa at his appointed time; and with ten times more regularity than the one hand set forth the hour on the cracked dial of the clock. Had a bombardment or an earthquake tumbled down the church, it could have been built up again from any of his works without an item missing that the most long-lived burgher in the place could not recall from childhood, and the right tale of bricks.

His colouring was dirty and opaque, looking as if his pictures had been dropped into the mud, dried hastily, and varnished with a treacly kind of stuff, to which the dirt adhered.

Serious towards his art and towards life in general, and naturally a prey to anyone who chose to cheat him, he yet was a still greater prey to his good impulses, which pushed him now and then to acts bordering on idiocy, that is, if anyone can say where generosity and folly, mingle and overlap.

Virtue in peril moved him to step out and offer his assistance upon the smallest provocation, and no one ever came more readily to lead blind men across the street, even although to do so he was obliged to leave a timid lady shivering upon a refuge in the rain. Children who could not find their way, lost dogs, and every kind of waif and stray came to him like steel filings to a magnet and stuck as fixedly. They used him, even to the dogs, who generally after a meal or two made off, leaving his rooms like pigsties, and his heart bleeding at their ingratitude, all to no purpose, for he no sooner saw another cur without a master than he repeated the experience, never remembering that the man who gives his bread to a strange dog loses the dog and bread.

But most of all those who were slighted or neglected had his sympathy. His friends all loved and laughed at him. Even the children he led home, taking them by the way into the pastry-cook's to buy them sweetmeats, looked at him with contempt, for they discerned at once he did not know the kind of chocolate that was in fashion amongst their slobbering compeers. Good humour in his case was of the nature of a devouring passion, not of a

virtue, and almost tended to become a vice, so much had he surrendered to its sway. Never in all his life had he been known to dance with a good-looking girl, for, as he stood crumpling his gloves up in his hand into a ball and making up his mind whom he should ask, someone was sure to bustle up to him and say, "Dear Mr. Smith, not one of the Miss Browns has had a partner; do you think that you would mind asking the eldest, and after that, taking her mother down to supper?" Then he would stumble forward and be introduced to some high-shouldered freckled damsel, who at first sight despised him, but used him as a makeshift till her own friends arrived, and then passed him on to her mother, who kept him busily employed fetching and carrying plates about till she had had her fill.

Still, he was popular with all who knew him, and not a fool, except upon the business of the world, about which he was ignorant to an incredible degree, though wise in theory, talking sententiously about all kinds of things which he had never seen but from afar. Though he was so minute a draughtsman that every edge of every brick he drew in Haarlem church was sharp as if it had been turned

out from the kiln but yesterday, he yet would theorise as to the advisability of blending all the picture in a harmonious whole. "Nature," he used to say, as if he had enunciated some great unsuspected truth, "abhors a line, hence we impressionists" (for he believed himself a follower of Manet) "always endeavour to present things in the mass."

He either never could have seen one of his own paintings, that is, with the eye of observation, or else his retina was so constructed as to present a different image to that of other men. Women and wine he used to touch on with the air of one who, though no Puritan, could never see what led men to excess in either of them, pronouncing them quite natural tastes, just as he might have said a hoop is a fit toy for children, or a mail-coach or motor-car for those of riper years.

He might have gone on all his life succouring the unmeritorious, painting the church at Haarlem every spring, and moralising with a half-foolish wisdom upon all things sublunary, had it not been that he once made a trip to the Levánt. Having made friends with several of the passengers on board the ship, they went ashore to dine at a small Spanish port.

His friends, mostly young men and painters, having dined badly at a Spanish Fonda, consuming dishes yellow with saffron, or fiery red with cayenne pepper, a sort of culinary parody upon the national flag, sat drinking what the waiter called champán. Why, when the native wines were good, they should have thought it best to drink the essence of petroleum at a pound a bottle is only known to youthful travellers. Still it was so, and as they drank their sweet and nauseous mixture, and cursed the place for being so unlike either to London or to Paris, they fell a-talking as to what they could do to pass away the time. There was no theatre, and gypsy dancing does not usually appeal to Northerners, who look for rapid motion in a dance, and miss the lights of theatres, not being able to see beauty in anything with a poor setting, after the style of those who think that paste well set, exceeds a diamond in a silver hoop. An unfathomable gulf is fixed between the idealism of the north and the materialistic vision of the south, both of which qualities are best for those who have them, as they are quite as unattainable by either, as is a cubit to the stature, merely by taking thought.

So, after a long stumbling conversation with the waiter in bad Spanish, and many curses on a place without amusements, they sallied forth, led by a boy, to visit what they called "the ladies," carrying Dutch Smith along with them. He went half philosophically on the "humani nihil alienum puto" system, and half protesting, but still a little interested in spite of everything.

Their guide, accustomed to such errands, led them by devious paths, up alleys where at the corners lights burned before a virgin or a saint; past taverns where men played at cards, their jackets thrown on their shoulders like a cloak; across a solitary plaza, one end of which was filled up by a church, the space before it, paved like a chessboard with blocks of marble, which in the moonlight seemed to dance about like waves.

With all he met he exchanged witticisms, which luckily his followers did not understand, pointing them with expressive pantomime quite understandable of all. Then he plunged into a dark silent street, and coming to a house through the drawn wooden blinds of which lights shone, stopped furtively before an iron grated door. Twice he hissed sharply like a snake, and ran his fingers up and down the iron

bars. The door was opened by a fat woman of about forty years of age, her sleek black hair shining with oil, white "cascarilla" on her face, and having as it were an air of an obscene prioress or abbess clinging about her, coming perhaps from the large bunch of keys she carried in her hand. She bade them welcome in a strange mixture of all languages, and following her they trooped in single file up the steep, badly lighted stair, leaving their guide smoking an evil-smelling cigarette, which he had taken from behind his ear and lighted from a dog-eared match-box hidden between his tattered trousers and his red greasy sash. As they passed up the stairs, stumbling and laughing, hearing the prioress call to her nuns to come down to the drawing-room, Smith reasoned with himself after the fashion of a man over-persuaded, but who knows he is a fool. He was quite sure, having been brought up as a Puritan, that to enter such a house was wrong, but then again, as a philosopher he felt half pleased to show his fortitude and his detachment from the things which rendered others fools.

Lighting a cigarette, to give him countenance, just as some ladies dare not for the world

walk through a public promenade without a parasol, he followed his companions, who were waiting for the coming of the nymphs. The place appeared to him not so repulsive as he had thought it must have been. Over the red-brick floor matting was spread, clean, white, and with a picture of a Moor on horseback, carrying a hawk, run through it in coloured worsted work. Upon a black enamelled table with a marble top there stood a vase of flowers, and on the mantelpiece were waxwork fruits, brought from Madeira, under a glass shade. The clock, stopped at the hour of twelve, was French, and represented a lady riding on a goat: perhaps Europa, or perhaps merely a fantasy of art drawn from its maker's brain. Blue glass spittoons stood here and there, and round the room were sofas draped in brown holland, and on the walls hung coloured prints of Garibaldi entering Rome, Victor Emmanuel with a moustache a fathom long, and one, faintly in character with the genius of the place, displayed a German-looking Venus toying with a fat, curly-headed youth who struggled in her arms. Nothing in all of this could shock a saint; even the large and common looking-glasses, draped in pink muslin to keep

away the flies, were not alarming, but for the crazy way that they were fastened to the wall.

A pattering of high heels and laughter on the stairs showed that the girls were coming down, and all the company, including Smith, greeted them in bad Spanish as they stood huddled in a heap, smiling, and pinching one another furtively, before the open door. Wrapped in their dressing-gowns, exhaling common scents, and painted heavily, with flowers in their hair, they filed into the room. Gravely they answered the salutations they received, and then sat down so quietly that it seemed to their northern visitors that they were seated at some evening party in some suburb, or that the girls were quite respectable. None of them asked for drink, and no one pushed herself forward beyond the others, being restrained by some invisible bond of etiquette, which seemed to keep them passive until their customers had chosen for themselves.

As conversation was impossible, and Esperanto, fortunately, had not then been invented, rather shamefacedly the visitors made their selection and trooped off up the stairs, the Oriental-looking girls, with their large lustrous

eyes, appearing still less civilised and still more Oriental beside the tall and civilised barbarians, so infinitely less human than themselves, who followed in their train. When all had gone, Dutch Smith sat talking to the prioress, who "spik a leetle Inglis," and informed him that she "was call Anita Ramos, Inglis is calling me fat Anne," and that she "like the Inglis gentlemen who coming to her house."

Smith, who had sat with the air as of a member of Parliament at a committee, during the process of the natural selection, now unbent and found himself more interested. He learned the lady was the daughter of a general in Granada, and had received "regular education," but circumstances and hard necessity, for "we are all the slaves of destiny, my son," had brought her to the pass of "keeping house of how you call it . . . doves." All of the doves were as hard-hearted as a millstone, though she did everything she could to make them comfortable, looking at them, not as some women did, but just as if they were her flesh, and she had borne them with much pain. As for herself, time was, a colonel, now in glory and, she hoped, pardoned for his sins, had been the mainstay of her life. At times she

hoped that he might marry her, and often prayed in church, for she was very Catholic, that he would do so, but who shall fight with death? Now she was old and ugly . . . "the Inglis gentleman was kind enough to say 'No, no,' but still it was so, and no one looked at her. Old and a sinful woman, but God knew her heart, and kindness touched her to the soul."

This was the kind of thing to appeal to the kind impulses and foolish sympathy of Smith, and, how he never knew, for certainly lust of the flesh was not a factor in the business, he let himself be led out of the drawing-room by the neglected fair.

The storks and swallows found him faithful at the spring tryst in Haarlem, painting his church industriously, and still the providence of everyone who chose to play upon his feelings; still a philosopher, though, as he said, even philosophy is not a certain guide, when human nature chooses to step in. Except for moralisings such as these, and now and then reflections, more or less bitter, which escaped him, on the female sex, the even tenor of his life ran on as it had done for the last twenty years, with the exception that he took a journey now

and then to drink the highly smelling waters of a German bath, from which he would return, shamefaced and irritated, and swearing that the malarial fever he had caught in the Levánt would plague him to the last day of his life. Then sitting down to work, he would proceed to daub his canvas with a colour as opaque as glue, and paint for hours just as a man throws coal into a cart, as if he sought to expiate by work the slip from virtue that he had made, as it were, inadvertently, and which was costing him so dear.

ANDORRA

ANDORRA yet survives and flourishes, one of the last of the innumerable small States that once were set as thick upon the map of Europe as stars in heaven on a clear winter's night.

True, San Marino still crowns its rock, and is well known to philatelists for its postage stamps, and illustrious in history for having sheltered Garibaldi, the last of the heroic figures of the past.

Montenegro falls into another category, for it had strength enough to win its independence by the force of arms. Some say that Monaco still rears its head, but such a cloud of *poudre de riz*, and such a stench of *patchouli*, of *frangipane*, of *trefle* and of white rose, *iris de Florence* and of *chypre*, and of the sweat of all the *cocottes* and the *rastas* of the whole world, obscure it, that reasonable men have doubted of its continued permanence upon the map. Andorra is different from all the rest in that she sells no stamps; has not a

cocotte or a gambler in all her territory; has never known that such a thing as *poudre de riz* ever existed; never saved any patriot in his extremity; and all her battles were fought in the dark ages against the Counts of Foix and the no less intruding bishops of La Seo de Urgél. Happy the country that has no history, some unimaginative man has said in some book or another. How right the Arabs were to have begun so many of their histories with the phrase, "Says someone."

Andorra, though, has had a history, as those who take the trouble to read Froissart may find out; but who reads Froissart nowadays? Certainly she must have fought against the above-named potentates to keep her independence; but she has kept it, not by fighting but by electing to live quietly, just as her fathers lived a thousand years ago.

True, every citizen is bound to have a gun; but that seems to be all the duty, in a moral military sense, he has, for no one ever saw him with it, or still less heard him touch it off. "To touch it off" seems possibly the phrase to use, as probably it is, in the most of cases, a hereditary piece of ordnance. For all that and in spite of lack of training, and simple as they

are, the people have a look as of a Puritan bull-terrier, uncouth and awkward, but not encouraging, should any person happen to tread upon its tail. Civil and courteous they are to a degree that seems extraordinary to those who live in countries which have emerged from patriarchal customs and not yet found their sea-legs in the new state of things. The greatest piece of fortune that has happened to this happy valley lost in the hills, is that up to the present time it has had no roads. Want of communication has kept out the tourist, under whose foot all ancient customs wither, as certainly as did the grass under the horse's hoof of Attila.

To reach the valley, one has to toil upon a mule over the mountain roads, stumbling and sliding, just as the Christian stumbles and slides upon the inconvenient path to Paradise. If though the latter traveller is repaid when he attains his goal, by visions of black eyes smiling upon him in eternal youth, and by supplies of sherbet cooled with snow (I fear that frequent communings with the Moors have caused me to confuse the persons and the substance of our paradise and theirs), so is the traveller repaid when, after shivering on the Puerto de

Saldeu, six thousand feet above sea-level, he gradually descends into a land of sunshine and of warmth.

Possibly in Juan Fernandez, or in some island in some sea or other, there may be valleys like Andorra; sometimes in dreams one sees (with the interior vision of the soul) a valley of the kind, hedged in with towering peaks to which cling pines, and with a little town set in a frame of gardens, from whence ascends the tinkle of a cow-bell or the faint wailing of a bagpipe made melodious by the distance that the sound travels through the air. Commonly in such cases the noise of a steam-hooter wakens one, as it once wakened William Morris after he had dreamed about John Ball, and of what England might have been without machinery, and the real world lies open, in its last incarnation of a dirty street, through which a shrieking motor runs like a car of Juggernaut.

In the deep valley of Andorra, down to which wind paths like beds of mountain burns, with lichened crosses standing at the corners, and at whose sides water is always plashing, led in a hollow tree or piped in canes, there is no need to rub the eyes (*el*

ojo con el codo), or if you must, you rub them to send yourself to sleep, so that the vision may not fade and leave you waking in the world.

Once you have crossed El Puerto de Saldeu, a world within a world reveals itself; a view of Europe as it must have been a hundred years ago. In little terraced fields planted with ripening tobacco, with beans and maize, in which lie water-melons so intensely green they seem like something tropical, women and men are working in the way that people must have worked in Arcady or the Paumotas before the well-intentioned missionary with his fateful hymn-book, already charged with death, appeared to save their souls and to deliver up their bodies to consumption and to drink. From the steep fields in which the trailing vines hang over the rough walls there comes a singing, between the note of a wild bird and that of some rude pipe, which winds itself about the inmost recesses of the soul (that is, the soul of those to whom its drawn-out melody appeals) as does no other music in the world, and shows the Arabs, on their way to take the Pope of Rome, as said their General Muza, by the beard, must have passed by Andorra and

left their trail. Long trains of mules with dangling trappings of red worsted, conveying bales of tobacco to the rough factory, where ten or a dozen women lazily work to make the nastiest cigars known to the world, pass to and fro; their drivers either sit sideways on their backs or pick their way upon the illusory roads beside them, their sticks stuck down between their ragged jackets and their shirts. In fact, a page of Borrow or of Ford, which some one has turned down and then forgotten, up to the present day. Now, when there are so few forgotten valleys and so few dog-eared pages worth the trouble to smooth out, I had half thought that to write this, is of the nature of a sacrilege, and that I had done better to have forgotten all about Andorra, or merely to have said the beds were verminous, the food abominable, and that the people spoke a dialect between the *patois* of Urgél and that of Foix, quite unintelligible to any reasonable man. Had but the valley been an island, I would certainly never have thought of telling its right bearings, or merely have reported it as a vigia or an atoll quite uninhabited, with brackish water and no landing-place for boats.

Withal, ten or eleven hours on muleback

make the navigation difficult enough to keep the island free from contamination, and it lies far beyond the ordinary track, except of ships that pass by night and do not care to have their number known.

Before I take you over the steep-pitched, one-arched bridge which crosses the Valira, with its long trails of ivy swinging eternally backwards and forwards above the roaring stream, guarded by ancient crosses at each end and with a low stone parapet a foot in height, which makes one think upon the proverb, "He who on horseback crosses the bridge, looks death between the eyes," it may be that you would like to hear about the road. Thus did the ancient navigators entertain their readers with a discussion upon every subject under heaven, commonly describing in great detail the Cipango or Manoa they had not reached, and almost at the last, say in a perfunctory way, on December the 13th I left Cadiz or San Lucar, as the case may be, in the caravel *Marigalanté*, sailing with the Acapulco fleet, and as God willed it, had a good passage of about two hundred days, seeing the flying-fish and other wonders of the deep, and by the grace of the Almighty safely came to port

in Acapulco of New Spain. Even Bernal Diaz, he of the Castle, the prince of chroniclers, so to speak, sandwiches in the date of his arrival between great slabs of facts and comments, terse, humorous and still pathetic, such as only he could make.

Well . . . two roads lie open to you. One by La Seo de Urgél and one by Ax-les-Thermes. The first is from the Spanish side and has its difficulties.

La Seo de Urgél, stronghold of Carlism, is situated—luckily for it—full eighty miles from any railway. You get off at Caláf (it sounds so Arabic, I had almost written El-Caláf), and get into the coach. That coach, a box, made of white pine and painted red and yellow, "Viva España!" conveys you in the short space of thirteen hours (but not including stoppages) up to La Seo de Urgél. Borrow and Ford and others have described the journey, not this particular journey, but others of the kind, so picturesquely that it is vain to try and emulate them. They both have told of the apocalyptic horse and the four mules; of the blaspheming *mayorál* and the *zagál* who now and then gets off and stimulates the team by throwing stones. Even

the names (in Ford's case, some of the oaths) have been preserved, so that we know them when we hear the long-drawn syllables of Capitaana, Generaala, and the impersonal Aquella Otra who receives most stones and all the choicest flowers of speech of the attendant sprite. Well do we know the country-women with their baskets, the fat and jovial priest, the friar, the horsedealer, and the strange Turk, or Greek, or Jew whose family from the days of Ferdinand Isabella had secretly continued the customs of their race. We know the gipsy who gets in, and speak to him (having the gift of tongues) in Romany. We share our lunch with all the passengers, drink with the priest out of a leather *bota*, and leave the company delighted with us and our fast friends for life.

Those were the days, and certainly Ford and George Borrow were the men; but even now the journey has points of resemblance to those they wrote about. The painted box on wheels lands you at last in the strange, world-forgotten town, to which but little breath of modernism has penetrated, and leaves you there marooned. Then you must hire a mule from an *arriero*, some Tio Chinche, Tio Ponzoña, or the like, and make your way over five

hours of mountain road, which leads along the banks of the Valira, until you come upon Andorra quite unexpectedly at the bottom of a pass. All things considered, I am doubtful whether this road is quite the best to take for those who pass their time in motor-cars and are accustomed to eat well at regular hours and sleep in comfortable beds; but as I never travelled it myself I do not describe it in great detail, though I am sure I could.

The other road, though not exactly what would be called luxurious, is yet a little easier than that by Seo de Urgél. A well-appointed railway (Baedeker says so) lands you at Ax-les-Thermes, passing by Foix and Pamiers, a name corrupted from the ancient Apamea (once more Baedeker). Then you take carriage for four hours to Hospitalet, a little goaty, sheepy town, Swiss-like and cold, and with its little inn facing the road and music of the ceaseless stream of motor-cars which come and go, as regularly as does the planetary system, from Ax to Puigcerdá. Once there, so that you turn your back on the high road, and stop your ears after the fashion of Ulysses or the deaf adder of the Scriptures, you are in the wilds. Cows wander down the street;

goats browse upon the broken walls; and round the rough stone cross, boys sit all day and criticise the women and the girls who go for water to the fountain at the corner of the square.

A road, like the dry track of a Highland burn, leads out towards Andorra, and on it, early in the morning, two horsemen, my guide and I, might have been seen some weeks ago making their way, just like the personages of some bygone novel, along the stony track. The trail led upwards through some Alpine pastures, in which men mowed the grass with scythes exactly like the scythe Time holds in ancient prints, immensely broad at the butt-end and tapering to a point. All wore blue *berets*, and all sang as they worked; but being on the French side of the Pyrenees, they sang the latest melodies from Paris music-halls instead of some wild *Jota fiera* as they would certainly have done upon the Spanish side.

We rode along, smoking and talking about "things and others," of the late war, for so it seemed to him, between the French and Prussians, and how he, with twelve youths from Hospitalet, had joined the army of the

Loire, and he alone returned. We talked of literature, that is, he did, unpacking all his store, which in the main consisted of a history of the Punic Wars, with much of Scipio ("Un fameux lapin, va!") and of Canibal. Soon at a little hamlet with a fine old cross we passed the frontier of Andorra, that is, my guide averred we did, as there was nothing tangible to mark the line.

Still we went on along the Ariège, which boiled and tumbled far below our feet, the horses giving us plenty of opportunity to look into its depths by hugging, after the fashion of their kind, the outside limit of the path.

No houses were in view, and only rarely on the road did a man pass, driving before him a packed mule, or now and then a girl seated upon an ass. Horses and cows in hundreds fed along the slopes, their bells tinkling and jangling in the still air, a thousand feet below. Sometimes they stood, their bellies buried in the rushing stream, and now and then two bulls fought in a perfunctory way, as sword-and-buckler men fought in old times in Edinburgh, to keep the "croon o' the Causeway," that is, when anyone was there to look at them and cheer them to the fray.

"C'est un vrai paradis pour toutes nos vaches," the guide observed as he broke off explaining all about Regulus and "la mort douloureuse de ce brave Canibal." Four or five hours we rode along, passing the little lake in which the Ariège has its source, and talking of the fall of Carthage, which in some way had got itself connected in the commentator's brain with *les sales Prussiens*, until we reached the pass.

"This is El Puerto de Saldeu," said my guide, breaking out suddenly in Spanish, which he spoke well after the French fashion, sounding all syllables quite equally, taking the nerve and backbone out of it, although he knew the words. Standing upon the summit of the pass and looking down upon a sea of pine woods and right into another brawling river, the Valira (the cousin of the Ariège), cutting its way through a deep channel in the hills, forming a valley which, in the distance, broadened to a great amphitheatre of mountains, above which rose white peaks, you feel that you have come into a world apart. It is so seldom nowadays, even in Equatorial Africa, to which you carry tents and smokeless powder, quick-firing guns, sun-helmets,

and are carried by subservient or rebellious porters (but in each case members of a subject race, with whom there can be naught in common save death or want of food), that you feel cut off from the world.

Once or twice in the lifetime of most men they feel alone, and I remember years ago, in Paraguay, coming down from the Yerbales, a hundred miles from anywhere, uncertain of the way, I camped, not having eaten all the day, beside a wood. Looking about, I found a bed of the sweet fruit known there as *guaviramı* (the sweetest in the world when you are parched with thirst and there is nothing else to eat), and having eaten well, unsaddled, and sitting down (it was just sunset) on my saddle-cloths, wrapped in my *poncho*, drew out tobacco, chopped it, and made a cigarette, then lit it with a flint and steel, striking the flint with care, not to alarm my horse. Just then a tiger roared, deep in the woods, and when, after a struggle, I had quieted my horse, for to have lost him would have been to lose my life, I felt I was alone.

Well, strange as it may seem, upon the Puerto de Saldeu, not forty miles from motor-cars, and with my garrulous and history-loving

guide beside me, looking down on a valley which had been civilised for centuries, I felt the feeling I had felt in Paraguay. One rarely feels it in the East, for there, even in deserts, man has so stamped himself upon the world, nothing astonishes, and one is certain, beyond the mountains, or in the middle of the plains, that you will come upon some tribe of nomads who have not changed since Nimrod hunted, and the walls of Babylon were built.

It may be that the sudden change from modern life created the impression; but as we drove the horses down the hill-path before us, cutting off corners to rejoin them, by little trails worn in the stony soil, it seemed one was about to enter into an unknown land.

Sliding and stumbling down the hill, the guide shod with his hemp-soled *alpargatas*, going as lightly as a cat, we reached the hamlet of Saldeu, which, with its deep projecting eaves, looked Swiss-like, had it not been for the iron rings set in the walls of every house to tie the mules to, and for the knockers placed about six feet above ground, so that the passer-by could knock without dismounting from his beast. We passed a watering-trough made of a huge old tree, look-

ing as if a tribe of Indians or negroes had left their dug-out high and dry, and riding through an archway, dismounted in a stable, in which some twenty mules, each with its pack beside it, stood munching at their corn.

Beside them, some sleeping on the packs and some upon the straw, lay men who, at first sight, I knew were smugglers, having seen many of them in the wild roadless country between Gibraltar and Gaucin, that is, the country that was wild and roadless thirty years ago. There in Saldeu they looked so much in place, the stables would have appeared as the stage would appear in *Carmen*, in the third act, without the turnpike Andaluces, who bear the mark of Saffron Hill writ large upon their backs.

Leaving our horses tied up, by the mules, we passed into a gallery which looked out on a maize-field, sloping down to a little burn, in which a row of women were washing clothes, their red and yellow petticoats giving them an air as of gigantic tulips, as they beat the linen on a board, or washed their stockings, filling them with sand and thumping on the stones.

In the long gallery, three or four men were

lounging, whilst one of them thrummed a guitar, whose strings, mended with wire, sent forth a sound, when the player struck them with the back of his brown hand, like an old-fashioned jew's-harp or a hurdy-gurdy. The march of progress has probably now relegated both these instruments to the museum, unmercifully leaving us the gramophone, which, like the rich, is always with us, to remind us of our sins.

Following the example of George Borrow (Ford would have addressed himself to a black-haired girl who leaned out of a window humming a *Zorzico*), I entered into conversation with the breakers of the law, and found that most of them had once been soldiers, and had fought in Cuba, about which they knew as much as a returned Imperial Yeoman knows about the Orange Free State, that is, the inside of the hospitals and the long useless marches in the sun, Much did our conversation turn upon things technical, such as the dogs that in Gibraltar run the gauntlet of the carbineers, each with his little pack upon his back, and many were the tales about the heroes who in times past had earned a place in history by their bold smuggling deeds.

The seven of Ecija held them all spell-bound, as the Homeric heroes held the Greeks, and when I spoke about Jose Maria, and of the town of Casariche, where those who have a soul above mere smuggling take boldly to the road, they crowded round to hear. The fate of El Vivillo and the great fight he made in the *cortijo* stirred their enthusiasm, and when at last the *Guardia Civil* entered the burning farm, leaving five of their number stretched upon the field, they held their breath, and one of them, murmuring "He was a man, may God have pardoned him," held out a glass of *aguardiente* in which I drank his health. They looked upon the heroes of the South as prototypes, averring sadly that in the North the true *aficion* was getting lost, and thought the smugglers of to-day were weaklings compared to those of yore. So might a superannuated general in his club lament the days of purchase in the Army, or in the fens of Cambridgeshire a stableman strive hard to mould himself after the true West-Riding type and as Sir Thomas Overbury says, "speak Northern no matter in what part of England he was born."

I learned how one of them died of yellow

fever, had been thrown out to wait the dead-cart, then come to life again when he had felt a land-crab nibbling at his toe, and so resuscitated. The word resuscitated evidently pleased him, for taking the guitar (after first passing it to me, in the fashion of Sir Philip Sidney, as if my need was more than his), when it came to his turn to play, struck into a *guajira*, to which, as he informed me, he had made the words and put a title, "El Resuscitao." Death had not staled the infinite variety of his arpeggios, nor had returning life altered the haunting melody of the half-negro air, nor blurred its semitones.

When he had finished, and as he hung the instrument upon a nail, a flower fluttered down from the window where the girl had leaned, and looking at the singer critically, I saw he was a handsome fellow and "properly deliver," which fact, no doubt, the giver of the flower had seen some time ago. After some talk about the badness of the government in Spain, a theme which, I believe, if one but chanced to meet him, so to speak, off duty, the Premier would join in with much zest, we passed into the dining-room, and sitting down at a long table, without a cloth, upon rough

wooden stools, enjoyed a meal of salt cod *à la Vizcaina*, pork sausages made red with saffron, and beans stewed in an oil which might have served to lubricate a waggon-wheel. The women of the house stood in the doors and round the table, as it would not have been a fitting thing for them to sit down with the men, although they joined quite freely in the conversation, which now and then was spiced as hotly as the sausages, only exclaiming "Bárbaro," when the bounds were overpassed, just as a mother may reprove her son for swearing, in a half-hearted way.

Smoking as sententiously as an Indian chief, the owner of the house, a member of the Council of the Republic, sat like an idol in a josshouse, carved in walnut wood. Report averred him rich, and witty (*gracioso*), an unusual compound, and his *gracia* consisted in his knack of giving nicknames, which form of wit is thought the highest in Andorra to which man can aspire. His fellow-humorists had countered heavily upon him by giving him the name of "Tio Alimentos," which he appeared to merit, for when the company had finished their repast, he sat down solemnly at his own hospitable board and fell

to work like a half-starved coyoté on a dead buffalo.

The smugglers took their leave, quite openly, with each man carrying on his back his bundle of tobacco, all smoking their own wares. They crossed the stream upon a narrow plank and slowly disappeared amongst the pine-trees, on the rough path to Spain. When they had gone, across the river floated back in the still air the long-drawn notes of the *guajira*, sung by "the resuscitated one," and taken up, when he had spent his breath, by all the rest of his compeers. At last it melted into the thin air, just like a cricket's note, but leaving still a sense of sound upon the ear. When it was quite extinguished, a window shut down in an upper room, showing the giver of the flower had been upon the watch for its last quavering notes.

It was time for them to go, for hardly had they disappeared than two or three French frontier guards, under the protection of an Andorran peasant, who, because he had a gun, appeared to think he was some kind of soldier, appeared, and asked if anyone had seen *les contrebandiers*. They were assured that no one had and went their way contentedly, smok-

ing cigars which had been purchased half an hour ago from our late fellow-guests.

Mounting our horses in the dark stables, and bending down to pass the door, we struck into the street, which ran about a hundred yards between low, deep-eaved houses, and then came out upon some stony fields, planted with what in Scotland used to be called long kale. The road was bounded by low walls of rough-piled stones, and at the top of a steep natural staircase of smooth rocks there stood a high stone crucifix, with something Gothic in the carving of the Christ, who, dumpy and too much foreshortened, looked like the figures on the Gloria door of Santiago de Campostela, and yet was human and even pathetic-looking on his grey granite cross.

My guide crossed himself rather in a furtive way, explaining that he did not do so as a "clerical," but because business took him often to Andorra, where every one was "black." The reason seemed to me sufficient in itself, although perhaps the act either was one of supererogation or of interior grace, as the place we were in was far from houses and no one was in sight.

Quaint little hamlets dotted the hillsides,

with little churches in proportion to their needs, and tiny belfries formed of rough stone and innocent of mortar, the windows in their sides so sharp, they looked as if they had been built for archers in the tower to shoot down their foes.

From every village ran a mule-track to the main torrent-bed that served as a high road, showing the stones all whitened, where mules and men had passed for centuries, and still had left the way as rough and difficult to tread as when the first explorer, stumbling on his beast, had passed along the trail.

In a deep chasm far below the road the river roared and tumbled, sending up clouds of spray, which hung in a white mist upon the larches growing by its brink.

At all the cross-roads stood a Calvary, and before every church a massive crucifix cut roughly in grey stone. Another staircase of a league or so led to the village of Encamp, where we dismounted at a *venta* and drank some *aguardiente*, which turned the water in the glass a milky white, and sitting on a barrel under some bundles of salt cod-fish which dangled from the roof, exchanged a greeting with the owner of the house, a red-haired Catalán.

A pale-faced caitiff-looking man he was, who might have sat for Judas to an Italian master, and yet he looked civilised amongst the rough Andorrans, as perhaps did his prototype of old amongst the fishermen.

Whilst we discoursed on politics, and answered questions as to the health of the young Queen of Spain, the possible duration of the Ministry in France, the price of barley in La Seo de Urgél, and whether Machaquito or Bombita was the best master of his art, a crowd had gathered at the door. They stood expectantly, just as in lands more favoured men wait to buy the last edition of a newspaper, not that they think it may be interesting, but on the chance of something turning up to gratify their hopes. I hoped I answered to the full what was expected of me, and thought I did so, until I heard a man remark I was the agent of a circus which they were waiting for. Sadly I spurred my unwilling pony through the crowd, looking as like a ring-master as I was able, but in my heart conscious of failure, for to give pleasure to one's fellows should be one's chiefest aim, here in this transitory world.

By quick descents in which the ponies put

their feet together and skated down the hill, just as a cow-boy's horse in the Bad Lands slips down a "slide," we cut off half a league, saving some time, and proving the proverb, that there is never a short cut without some trouble, is not quite absolute.

Settling our hats upon our heads, and brushing off the dust with which the ponies' scramble on the slide had covered all our clothes, we struggled back into the road which led through groves of ilexes and chestnut trees and finally emerged into a rich and fertile valley, where little fields, fenced with flat pieces of grey stone stuck close together, encircled every house. Maize and tobacco showed the richness of the soil, and as we rode along, the mule-path melted by degrees into a modern road. A milestone bore upon its face "Andorra, 9 kilometros," but as upon the road itself there was no traffic, save for the passing of a mule-team now and then, or a stout farmer riding on his nag, with an old rusty gun tied to the cantle of his saddle, it seemed a work of supererogation, and my guide cursed it as an innovation which lamed the horses, and would, in his opinion, ruin the country, in the long run, for men who lived by mules. I felt by intuition

he was right, for the stout mountain pony that I rode, active and hardy as a goat on the steep trails that we had left, stumbled perpetually and fell upon his nose. I hauled him up upon his feet, and getting off found that his knees were quite undamaged, whilst my guide, sitting on his horse, looked at me pleasantly, saying with pride, "He often falls upon this portion of the road, but never hurts himself."

I did not comment on the fact, knowing the horseman's grave is always open, and that the wayfarer may sometimes stumble on the road towards Andorra, even when not a fool.

The sun was sinking as we came to Las Escaldas, a little watering-place built in a gorge between the hills. The river rushes by the side of the main street, in which, hedged in by cottages with overhanging eaves, and set about with half-built little villas, stands the Bath House, in which the citizens of the Republic bathe and drink sulphuretted water of some kind, which, as I learned with pleasure, is nauseous to the taste and smells like rotten eggs.

All was in miniature and as if drawn to the scale of the Republic, of which it is the pride.

Cows sauntered up and down the street, and

from the mills came the click-clack of hoppers, as the enormous wooden wheels, constructed to require the greatest possible amount of water-power to set them going, slowly revolved with a dull bellowing noise.

All was Arcadian, and from every side there came the noise of water which in a hundred rills ran everywhere, rills and more rills and still more rills, with water led in canes, in hollow trunks of trees, splashing down rocks and gurgling under the high-pitched little bridges, with an old millstone forming the keystone of the arch.

Burly Andorrans, who in the tranquil current of their lives could never have endured an ache or pain, but who were led to take the cure just as a millionaire at Aix-les-Bains, to drink its nauseating waters, in case at any future time he may be ill, lounged up and down and passed the time of day.

Women conversed across the street from balconies, informing those who cared to listen, of their domestic troubles, and of their children's health. A priest went down the street, and as he walked along, from every house a little boy or girl rushed up to him and raised his fingers to their lips, catching a

blessing as it were upon the wing, and rushing back again.

In order that no jot or tittle of the Arcadian scene should be left wanting, just as I crossed the little Plaza of the town, a stout, broad-shouldered peasant passed, jogging upon his nag. His clothes were made of a two-carat kind of cloth, and on his head he wore an imitation Panama, set firmly on his brows. He sat upon his horse, a fine bay colt with four white feet and a white star upon its forehead and branded with a K, strongly and squarely, with something of the look of Colleone, on his immortal steed. On the high pommel of his old-fashioned Spanish saddle, of the kind called *albarda*, he rested his crossed hands, and as he slowly jogged along at the pace known as *el paso Castellano*, his horse's tail swung to each movement, and his fore feet now and then rang against the stirrups, in his high dishing gait.

Men nodded to him and the boys all seemed his friends, and from the windows women looked shyly but approvingly as he passed slowly down the street.

"Voici le Président!" exclaimed my guide, adding for my instruction in a low tone, "pas

fier le bonhomme," and as he spoke he raised his hat and was saluted gravely in return by the chief magistrate. I, too, saluted, and was saluted in return, and then leaving the despot in the full glare of the fierce light which no doubt beats as fiercely on the presidential chair as on the throne, rode through the winding street, passing the time of day with the inhabitants all seated at their doors. Women sat twirling distaffs, and in the fields girls held their cows by a long cord; some combed their hair, and others seated on the ground held children on their knees, whose heads they searched as diligently as a man hunts a particle in a Greek lexicon, in spite of kicks and cries.

No one appeared to use the modern road, which took its course, remote, unfinished, and possibly slow, between some water meadows; but we, knowing the traditions, so to speak, struck into the old trail.

It wound about, through a small grove of ilexes, and though the capital was a short league away, had not been altered since the creation of the world, so that at times we skirted huge boulders, and again dodged the spray of waterfalls, picking our way, just as

one picks it in the Atlas mountains, and taking care to step into the holes made by the traffic of the ages, by the mules' passing feet.

The oak wood passed, the valley broadened out into a fertile plain, to which tobacco gave an air as of the "Vuelta de Abajo," with its brown ripening leaves. Streams flecked the mountain sides with streaks of silver, making them seem alive with movement, and at the bottom of a cliff Andorra lay, grey, ancient, and an epitome in stone of what the greater part of European towns had been, in the long-vanished past.

We passed the roughly built tobacco factory, stopping a moment to buy a few cigars, so to speak, at the fountain head, finding them green and pungent and with a flavour something resembling the perfume of a weasel with a strong touch of goat.

Wrapped in a coarse brown paper with the mendacious legend "Tabaco Filipino" stamped upon it in faint lettering, they served to form the universal brotherhood of man, and show one plainly that a touch of commerce, even so slight a one as this, makes everybody kin.

Ten hours of riding on the mountain trails

had brought us to our Mecca, into which we passed over the steep-pitched bridge on the Valira, just as the night closed in.

The Plaza with its tall old houses, frescoed with yellow arabesques, was quite deserted, save for a pig or two which lay about, right in the middle of the square, or dodged the efforts of a boy to drive it home. On one side rose the belfry above the body of the church, just as a lighthouse rises on a shoal.

Into its doors were passing women, veiled to the eyes in black, yellow and parchment-looking, and of a type that only Spain affords.

Their only home appears to be the church, where they squat motionless upon the floor, or, kneeling on a chair, remain for hours with their eyes fixed upon a saint.

The beggars at the door all know them and long have recognised they have no alms to give, and as they pass mutter to one another, "There goes old Doña Tecla," or "Doña Gertrudis," or simply, as they hold the leather curtain up, say "La Beata," in a resigned and hopeless way, knowing that the poor lady's need is probably as great as is their own, and then sink back again upon the moulding underneath the door, to wait what fate may bring.

Upon the other side was *El Commercio*, that is, the shops, which in this instance were represented by the apothecary and a large general store. I glanced inside as we passed by, and in them sat the usual *Tertulia*, that is, the gathering which in Spain repairs to shops at night to talk about the news.

I only caught a word or two, and passing by the other portion of the "Commerce" of the place, saw quiet women cheapening calicoes, and heard upon the counter the sharp ring of a large silver dollar and an expostulating voice exclaiming, "No, Señor, it is not false, nor yet from Seville as you say, but sound and of the law."

One narrow winding lane led us into another lane, as winding as the last, in which our horses, though they knew the way, stumbled and slithered and now and then stood snorting at a black object on the ground which, when we passed it, proved to be a pig asleep and snoring, and stretched out at his ease. One little square led to another little square, with houses all with long flights of steps in front of them, on which their owners sat, and in response to greeting, told us "to go with God," a form of salutation which in most other lands

has fallen out of fashion, perhaps because God does not manifest himself so plainly as He does in Andorra, or from some other cause.

At the *posada* door we met the owner, a stout Andorran known as "El Tio Calounes," a burly, greasy-looking man, his head bound in a black silk handkerchief with the end dangling underneath his hat, and smoking pensively.

Travellers are not too frequent in these parts, but for all that he was not anxious in the least to welcome us, but seemed put out by our arrival, till I, getting abruptly off my horse, unpacked a budget of the news of the world, quickly and volubly and so distorted as to be palatable to almost everybody. The stern Republican unbent, and after greetings faithfully given and received upon both sides, said in an uncouth dialect, "Seeing you come with François here, I thought you were from France."

This difficulty over, we soon were friends, and talked till supper-time, upon all kinds of things, such as the spread of Carlism in La Seo de Urgél, and the new bishop, who it appeared was a friend of the King's, who Tio Calounes always called Alfonsito, either to

show he was a democrat or in affection, for he averred that he had heard the King was one who gave himself no airs (*no se daba tono*) and could ride well and shoot. Accomplishments of that kind being exactly what men look for in emperors and kings, I instantly agreed with him, and ventured to predict a happy and prosperous reign for one who in his youth had risen to the sense of his responsibilities and made his people's welfare his first care and duty, above all other things.

When at last supper came, we took it in a room lighted by a petroleum lamp, which leaked, and on whose sides, stuck in the oil that daubed them, were carcases of moths and flies, which fell into the soup. Mosquitoes hummed, and now and then a rat ran through the room and bats flew in and out, circling about above our heads like swallows round a pool.

As for the meal itself, it was a replica of the lunch at Saldeu, though perhaps even more highly flavoured, and after it we sat and smoked the national cigars, during a thunder-storm.

The bedroom which I shared with a French cattle-dealer, who was drunk and snored as

loudly as a gramophone, contained two iron beds, made for the Spanish market or in Barcelona, of a thin iron piping with pictures of the Annunciation in three colours set in a varnished oval at the head. They had the highest free-board, if the term free-board rightly applies to beds, that I have ever seen in all my wanderings.

Mosquitoes and a fair sprinkling of the pterodactyl that have remained in the Republic, rendered night one long conflict, so that I heard the long-drawn cry of the *sereno*, as he called every hour.

Early next morning I was afoot and found the owner of the house still at his post, smoking and drinking coffee, which he was stirring with a knife, as he sat tilted on a chair. The town was waking, and in the streets women drove goats to pasture, or led the horses down to water, or stood about the fountain in the square, waiting their turn to fill brass water-buckets, which they bore balanced on their heads. Men in the old Andorran dress, breeches and jacket of dark velveteen with sashes round their waists, red Phrygian caps upon their heads, their legs encased in woollen stockings of a grey-bluish hue, and on their

feet white *alpargatas*, lounged smoking everywhere.

Under arcades, mule-drivers were packing mules, which, after the fashion of their kind the whole world over, squealed and kicked spitefully, now and then throwing off their load, just as the men were tugging at the ropes, with their feet stuck against the girths or twisting them with sticks.

The acrid reek of wood curled lazily into the sky and the dense smoke of charcoal braziers placed before the doors to "pass" as people say in Spanish, combined with the rank scent of goats and sheep, which here and there were folded in a deserted cottage, produced a pungent scent such as that which in markets in the East blends with the morning air.

At the south corner of the town, built of grey stone to which a yellow lichen clings and flanked by turrets at each angle of the tower, rises the "Valley House."*

Built, as some commentators say, in the tenth century, though others just as strongly hold the twelfth as the true date of its foundation, it serves as Council-chamber, prison, and

* Casa del Val.

archive, and as it looks toward the south over an ocean of tobacco-fields, with the Valira brawling underneath its walls, is the true centre of the microcosm which clusters at its gate.

For centuries, when throughout Europe liberty was dead, stifled in England by the nobles, and in Spain killed at Villalár, in Italy drugged by the Popes, and in the North chilled by the feudal system with its ideal of a humanity that commences with the baron, here it has flourished in a patriarchal way, just as a pine, which in a rich soil deteriorates and dies, springs vigorous from stones.

A woman summoned from her spinning and carrying in her hand a key ten inches long, fit for the gate of a great town or citadel, served as the janitress.

With pride she struggled with the lock, which only yielded to the united efforts of the guide and myself and of the faithful guardian of the key, and ushered us within.

In a great vaulted hall the Council meets, the members, twenty-five in number, chosen by universal suffrage, the test of voting being apparently the strength to bear a gun, assemble, and debate. When they have finished their

deliberations, which, as the janitress informed me, rarely exceed an hour or two in length, they dine together at great tables, set in the Council-room.

The custom seems a good one and might be followed with advantage in other Parliaments, for it promotes good feeling and cannot be a hindrance to debate, judging at least from the way jurymen despatch their business, when dinner is in sight.

The robes and the three-cornered hats of all these simple representatives were hanging upon pegs, and a rough picture done from a photograph showed them assembled at the entrance to the place and in the midst of them their overlord, the Bishop of Urgél, who seemed a pleasing-looking prelate, neither too fat nor thin.

Below the Council-chamber is the State kitchen in which great cauldrons swung on weighty chains, and in them, so the janitress averred, are cooked whole kids and sucking-pigs and trifles of that kind which keep the fire of liberty alight in the stout stomachs of the Gargantuan Archons who batten on the cheer.

The stables where their horses and their

mules, for many of the members have a long ride when they attend their parliamentary duties, are tied and munch their corn, what time their masters banquet and debate, are large and airy and perhaps rather dirtier than is a cattle-byre in the Long Island or Benbécula, but still seemed adequate enough for the rough horses and the mules I met upon the road.

A priest assured me that there is no written law in the community, but that in spite of this the folk are honest and God-fearing, and as there are no laws to break, they never break them, which piece of reasoning upon his part seemed to me quite conclusive, and taken into consideration with the fact that public functionaries have no fixed salaries, but serve their valley all for the honour and the glory of the thing, makes up a state of things almost ideal in this transitory world, that is if transitory can be applied to places like Andorra, which never can have suffered any change since God was God or the sun first commenced to shine upon the hills.

Next morning saw me early on the road, riding along and smoking, musing contentedly on this thing and on that, upon the fall of

nations and of kings, creeds, principalities, and powers, and why it is that fate had spared Andorra when it had eaten up Greece, Rome, and Babylon, and also on the various ways in which men pass their lives struggling to do things quite impossible to do, when, after all, nothing is better than to jog along the road and to shout "Arré" loudly now and then when a mule lags behind.

EL PASTOR DE LAS NAVAS

Amongst the multitudinous figures above the high altar of the Cathedral of Toledo, there is one that I have often caught myself looking at with as great interest as if it were a work of art. It represents, roughly painted, carved in a warm yellow stone that seems to have congealed sunshine in it, the figure of a mediæval Spanish shepherd. His loose frock is secured by a belt, and falls to his knees, leaving the rest of his legs bare. On his feet are sandals. His head is bare, and shows a thick growth of curly black hair, clustering round his blunt, open face, in which are set two honest brown eyes, which look out upon the world so directly that you feel at once their owner is an Old Christian, on all four sides, as the saying is, and without a drop of either Jewish or Moorish blood.

A long and rough staff is in his hand, and round his waist is hung a gourd, just such a gourd as you can see growing to-day in the

cigarrales outside the town. On every side of him stand in serried ranks the effigies of kings, of knights, of saints, of virgins, bishops, confessors, and on his left hand a statue of a converted Moorish *alfaqui*, who by the grace of God became a Christian to the greater glory of our faith, and perhaps to serve as an example of the unsearchable ways of the Creator of the world, who might have made him, if He had chosen so to do, a Christian, without attaching to him the stain of being a traitor to the faith in which he had been bred.

All the stone worthies look nobly out upon the world, with the exception of the poor *alfaqui*, who has a hangdog air as of a renegade.

They seem to feel that they will never die, whilst those they look at, all are transitory.

The shepherd has no look either of faith or of nobility, but leans upon his staff just as he must have leaned upon it in his life, when he stood, on the sunburnt plain, a mere dark spot, watching his black and yellow sheep, amongst grey plants of fennel and yellow flowering thistles, which in the clear Castilian air stand up so sharp against the sky that they appear as tall as trees.

Nothing in his appearance, as he stands so modestly, waiting apparently for the sun to strike upon some ridge or other of the hills, to know the time, to turn his flock towards home, suggests that he was other than a shepherd, such as a hundred others of his kind. Why he should be enshrined amongst so many noble lords and ladies above the altar, opposite the silver gates that shut the choir, in the same fane in which Don Alvaro de Luna sits headless in his vault; why he should be bejewelled when the sun streams through the glorious stained glass, as if he were a knight, a king, a bishop, or a saint; why he should have been counted worthy to appear in the long line of figures that ring about S. James himself, trampling a never-dying Moor to death under his horse's hoofs, the sacristan will tell those who expend a franc. Look at him well and mark his sturdy legs, his hands like roots of whin-bushes, his air of simple faith made manifest in all his carriage, and then turn to the encircling throng of knights and nobles, his bold compeers in stone, and see if in their eyes there is not to be found a look of gratitude and admiration for the squat figure who makes so strange a blot amongst their ranks. Why

do they look at him, as you might look upon a man who had done you some great service, almost unconsciously, a service greater than it is possible to pay ?

Hard by, beneath the altar of El Transito, are laid the bones of Juan Padilla and his heroic wife, those of Juan Bravo, and the rest of the illustrious band who died at Villalár. Kings, constables, an emperor, bishops, archbishops, emirs, sultans, and high-priests have helped to form the penetrating dust that makes the eyes smart in Toledo when the north wind blows, and which makes every church smell like a charnel-house. Scholars and queens and clerks, learned both in Arabic and Latin, and warriors skilled in both saddles, the high-peaked tree of Fez and the flat bur of Europe, as is set forth upon their tombs, lie thick on every side.

All round the church in which the shepherd stands so patiently, unmarked by those whose admiration only can be stirred up by high-sounding names, the wondrous city stretches out a very palimpsest of Gothic superposed on Moorish architecture, and that again reared on foundations dug by the Romans, set with innumerable gems, El Cristo de la Luz, the

Alcázar, Santa Maria la Blanca, once a synagogue, a mosque, and now a church, the jewelled cloister of San Juan, the square known as the Zocodovér, the Puerta del Cambron, and all the myriad and tortuous lanes in which the marigolds grow from the walls, and where the red valerian attracts the cats, from Moorish ajimeces—all go to form a casket in which each house has something noble in it, even in decay. A noble city, set on a noble river and surrounded by a landscape resembling nothing more than that seen in the moon through a good telescope; and in it, in its chiefest gem, the incomparable church, in which the French once bivouacked, stabling their horses in the choir, unconscious that the heavy gates that shut it, then painted black, were solid plate, the simple figure stands.

He stands unconscious that the whole city, Spain and even Christendom itself perhaps, owes its existence to his fortunate appearance, and that without his knowledge of the passes in the hills, for at the time the Moorish host lay in Las Navas de Tolosa, and all the width of Sierra Morena intervened between them and Alfonso (he who rode his

horse into the waves at Algeciras, brandishing his sword against the infidel across the straits), we all should now be rising in the night to testify to the existence of the one God and of his prophet, the immortal camel-driver.

In those days, whilst the shepherd, whose effigy now is sculptured in the church, kept sheep upon the slopes of the dark mountains that cut Castile off from the south, a wave of faith had stirred the souls of the veiled camel-riders, deep in the deserts far below Marrakesh, impelling them to move, just as the instinct stirs a swallow to take wing. Lost in the sand, owning no property but their swift camels, which drink only on the third morning after they have drunk, and a few horses foaled as they say by mares impregnated by the south wind, they cherished their belief in the one God, their God, made in their image, austere, patient of hardships, self-centred, individual, and impatient of restraint. They felt, there, in their thirsty land, in which not even an occasional great rock affords a shade; there, where the lizard's head is almost photographed upon the sand; where water is the chiefest gift that Allah gives, and that so

sparingly he seems to know it is above all price, and therefore often impregnates it with salt, so that its drinkers shall not turn necessity to pleasure, that the time had arrived to testify.

They knew that far away in Spain their brethren had become degenerate, reading and writing, studying the Greek philosophers, eating and drinking, not to sustain life, but to gratify the senses, and that the land they lived in was a paradise, all ready to their hand. There, poets told them that the jasmine ever flowered, the roses bloomed, and that the sound of water always fell upon the ear, trickling in rills or plashing on the stones. Almost involuntarily, they found themselves upon the march. They poured across the Atlas, crossing its snowy passes (they who had never felt the cold, dressed in their unsubstantial desert blue), through the rich valleys of the Sus and to the north of the Oasis of the Palms, past Tafilet the sacred city, till they appeared like locusts on the wing, before Marrakesh, assaulted, conquered it, dethroned the king and placed one of themselves upon the throne, making him God's vicegerent upon earth, by the one right,

the sword, they and their God could comprehend.

Saints, brown and ragged, sometimes illuminated folk, often mere madmen, preached to them as they lay camped in the palm woods that circle round Marrakesh, setting it in a ring of green enamel, and they, in their dark goatskin tents pursued the desert life, watching their camels, sitting for hours looking away at nothing, silent, and all veiled to the eyes. Their new-appointed Sultan, Yusuf-ibn-Tachfin, felt their fire in his veins, and passed his time between the mosque, the javelin-play on horseback, and in conferring with his wise magicians on the right time to start, and whether stars seemed favourable to those of the One God. From every side, as months slipped past, tribes and more tribes came to his standard, camping upon the stony plain, amongst the palm woods, and filling all the country round about with men all clamouring to be led against the foe.

All the wild Berbers of the Atlas came, on foot or riding shaggy ponies and rough mountain mules. In their shrill Shillah tongue they sang wild songs that sounded like the chattering of the cranes. They stalked about

dressed in their orange-coloured cloaks, with the strange eye embroidered on the back, that makes a band of them appear like Argus, all composed of eyes.

Ait Atta came, the riders of the plains, skilled in the javelin, living like pirates by plundering caravans, just as the pirates of the sea plunder the ships both of the Faithful and of the Christian dogs.

From far Shingeit, close to the confines of the Slaves of Idols, came bands of holy men, each with his Koran in one hand and in the other a long spear. The hunters of El Jouf, who ride the wind-drinkers that gallop down the ostrich and the gazelle, their ragged-looking mares descended from the mares the Prophet rode, to one of which Yusuf-ibn-Tachfin owed his escape and life after the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, marched in to join the last and greatest of the Arab raids. Tuaregs and men from Timbuctu, black as jinoun and only but a little while ago converted to the faith, arrived and camped beside the rest. Rehamna and Howara sent contingents, and from Glimim came men commanded by the Biruks, who claim descent from Hannibal and the great Barca clan. Then by degrees and without

order, just as a flight of locusts starts upon the wing, the horde began to move. It struggled through Chawia, at every step receiving reinforcements, from Tafilet, from Fez, from Tlemcen, and taking with it all the tribes through which it passed upon its way. At Tangier and Hisnr-el-Mujaz, the Castle of the Crossing, was the tryst set, and there the ships were sent to ferry them across.

In Christendom news had been brought to King Alfonso at Toledo, where he held his court, of the great gathering across the straits. Horsemen came spurring in, telling the Andalos was all aflame, bringing reports that the army of the infidel numbered a million men. Fear fell upon the King, and he sent messages across the Pyrenees to France, Navarre, to Germany, to Rome, even to farthest England, to come and strike for Christ, for Christendom was in sore danger, from the number of the foe. Still as they mustered from the various kingdoms and principalities, their forces straggling through the Pyrenees, passing through miles of beech forests at Roncesválles, and over the Sompórt, following the course of the tumultuous Aragón, skirting the little town of Jaca, which rises

from the plain just as Gibraltar rises from the sea, and coming out at length upon the brown Castilian plain, the infidels at Hisnr-el-Mujaz were crossing busily in galleys, feluccas, fishing-boats, and great barcazas, the strait they called the Gate of the Road, as by it they were wont to enter Christendom. At last on both sides they were ready, and from Toledo the Christian army, swollen by contingents from every European Power, advanced to meet the Moors, marching from Cordoba, up to the central plain. On the one side, the Christian host moved on under the banner of the Cross, its warriors, sheathed in mail, riding their ponderous Flemish warhorses, with crossbowmen from Genoa, archers from England, and Swiss battalions bristling with pikes, its ranks in order, and with a host of priests and bishops just behind the King; the Spaniards, almost as swarthy as the Moors, riding their semi-Moorish horses, fearing no heat nor cold, sober of diet, fierce as Indians, and northern knights, who in the unfamiliar climate and vegetation thought they already were in Africa. Upon the other, like an angry sea, the Infidel straggled and stormed along, their horses neighing and fight-

ing with each other, keeping no order in their ranks, and more destructive to the country that they passed than is a band of wolves amongst a flock of sheep, the Sultan, dressed in white, riding in front under a crimson umbrella, with footmen trotting by his side. Each army must have seen the sullen mass of the great sierra that cuts the plain, barring the desert wind from Africa, tempering the piercing Christian northern air, and serving as a barrier to vegetation, so that the plants from Africa and Europe in neither instance venture to the further side.

Still they marched on, and, coming to the hills, both armies camped, for neither knew the passes and both were fearful of surprise. The Commander of the Faithful pitched his camp on the south side upon Las Navas de Tolosa, stretching a strong iron chain around his tents, and on the north the pavilion of the Christian King, conspicuous by the blood-and-orange standard fluttering at the door upon a lance, stood high above the rest. Long did they lie upon their arms, and each of them sent out their scouts to find a passage through the hills, and each without success. At last, as King Alfonso sat in his tent cursing and

praying, and with his army almost about to separate, a shepherd came to him and, being brought into the tent, offered to show the King a path by which merino sheep descend to the rich plains, when on the northern side winter has burned the grass.

Chroniclers on both sides have told the battle, those of the Spaniards relating how the Christians smote the Moors, killing two hundred thousand of them, and how Don Sancho of Navarre, the strongest man in all the army, burst through the chains that ringed the Sultan's tent. They tell, with many pious saws, how great the slaughter was, and of the mighty spoil the Lord of Hosts vouchsafed to grant them, and they aver the blessed San Isidro, taking upon him (in his humility) the style and garments of a shepherd, appeared and led them on.

All this they say and much more of the same kind, all in the vein of men who know the Lord has chosen them to be His instruments. The Moors say less, and merely state Allah did not see fit to smile upon their arms, and how (no doubt to punish lack of faith) that he delivered them into the hands of the accursed King Alfonso; may God destroy him

and consume his race in fire! Then they give praise to the One God, and say, in passing, that Yusuf-ibn-Tachfin, seeing his warriors flee and himself left alone, was sitting silently before his tent when there appeared an Arab from El Jouf, an aged man with a white beard, and leading in a rope of camel's hair a bright bay Arab mare.

Laying his hand upon the Emir's shoulder, he said: "Mount and ride; the mare is desert-bred, nurtured on camel's milk, and of the colour that the Prophet—may God have pardoned him—commends. When greys and chestnuts falter in the race and roans and blacks sink down and wallow in the sand, she will still pull upon her bridle. Mount and ride." The Emir mounted and escaped, and King Alfonso marched back to Toledo carrying the spoil and a long line of captives in his train. Bishops and archbishops celebrated solemn thanksgivings in the cathedral, thanking especially the blessed San Isidro for his protection of the host, and praising his humility for having left the celestial choirs and taken on him once again a humble shepherd's weeds. All Christendom heaved a sigh of satisfaction at its escape, and some one, per-

haps a simple man to whose unlearned eyes the vision of the blessed San Isidro was not vouchsafed, employed a stonecutter to carve the figure of the man who, after God, had been the instrument of saving all the Christian world, and set it up on high.

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